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MASTER SPIRITS OF LITERATURE

EDITED BY

GEORGE RAPALL NOYES

AND

WALTER MORRIS HART

"A good book is the precious life-blood of a Master Spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."—MILTON, *Areopagitica.*

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PREFACE

THE method followed in this book is sufficiently unusual to justify a few words of explanation. It has been my purpose to present my hero, not as an independent figure, but as the mouthpiece of a great period of the world's history. I have attempted to trace a portrait of the Middle Ages with Dante's features showing through. At length or in brief according to the degree in which they wore his likeness, various phases of medieval life have been first discust and then illustrated by copious citations from the mighty spokesman. Thus I have hoped to differentiate my study from the many volumes already devoted to the Florentine poet, and, at the same time, to contribute somewhat to the diffusion of knowledge of the interesting but still generally unfamiliar epoch which he represents. For he does represent his time as no other age has ever been represented by any one man.

Direct contact with our author is impossible to those ignorant of his language; an approach, however, is afforded by translation. Every passage I have introduced is quoted in English dress. Many of the versions are borrowed from previous translators, but more (all those, in fact, that bear no special label) are my own. In these I have tried to copy the metrical forms of the original as closely as the habits of our tongue permit.

Some historical matter has been drawn from *The Medieval Empire*, by Herbert Fisher. Concerning the poet's life my principal authority has been N. Zingarelli, with his *Dante* and *Vita di Dante in Compendio*. I am indebted to Paget Toynbee's *Dante Dictionary* for certain biographical details relating to other persons. Not a few notes on medieval books and men are taken from *La connaissance de la nature et du monde au moyen age* by C. V. Langlois and from *The Mediæval Mind* by H. O. Taylor. Acknowledgment of the translations utilized is briefly made in the text, the full titles and other data being given in the selected Bibliography to be found at the end of this volume; and I take this opportunity to thank the respective publishers for the courtesy accorded me. To the general editors of this series I wish to express my gratitude for their substantial help.

C. H. G.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., April, 1915.

DANTE ALIGHIERI

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CHAPTER I

DANTE ALIGHIERI

THE three poets who have most profoundly stirred man's imagination are remote and evasive figures. Creators of markt human types, their own individuality remains indistinct; like other creative deities, they seem to dwell beyond the clouds. Their intellectual personality, to be sure, is revealed to us in some measure by their works; but we can form no clear idea of their flesh-and-blood selves, their habits of life, the interlocking steps of their career. Of Homer we know nothing whatever. Concerning Dante we have a good many bits of information, furnisht largely by himself, but not enough to patch together into a biography; we have one probably authentic portrait, painted, it would seem, from memory, after his death, and one full, nearly contemporary description, written by a man who never knew him. As to Shakspere, our facts are not so scanty as they are inconsecutive and uncharacteristic, and his various like-

nesses are perhaps most impressive for their unlikeness to one another. How different is the case of those poets whom we are accustomed to place immediately after these three—Goethe, let us say, and Milton!

A few pages suffice to narrate what is known of Dante's bodily existence. We need take no account of the mass of floating anecdote that has gathered about him, as it clusters around every conspicuous name. He was born in the late spring of 1265 in the busy, independent, ambitious town of Florence. His people, tho not rich, had a certain claim to gentility; the lad was well brought up, and associated with the best families. He was probably affianced in childhood to a girl named Gemma, of the aristocratic Donati clan. Both country and city life were familiar to him. His mother having died early, his father married again; then past away himself while Dante was still a boy, leaving him a half-sister and a half-brother and also, we may infer, one own sister. This father, a man of no great prominence, is said to have been a notary; Dante, as far as we are aware, had no regular occupation. To the new pastime of verse-making, which had appeared in Italy scarce half a century before, and was just now making its way into commercial Florence, the youth devoted himself with might and main. Eagerly and minutely he studied the productions of his predecessors in Provence and in his own land, and, as he tells us, made out for himself the art of riming. We may be sure that he loved also the sister arts: a famous scene in the *New Life* shows

him "drawing figures of angels," the *Divine Comedy* is full of references to music; and among his friends we find not only the poets Guido Cavalcanti, Lapo Gianni, Cino da Pistoia, but also the painter Giotto and the musician Casella. At the age of eighteen he began to win distinction as a lyric poet. Thus he was brought into contact with the literary men of his day and became a person of some mark in the community. His verses sing of several young ladies, but especially of a certain Beatrice, presumably a neighbor's daughter, whom he ardently worshipt but never wooed. A poet of Bologna, Guido Guinizelli, had started the fashion of a mystic conception of love, which exalted woman to a symbol of the heavenly intelligence, or angelic nature, and so made her a fit object of adoration. To such an idealization Dante was predisposed by his deeply religious temperament. He made of Beatrice more and more the guiding star of his life, and finally saw in her the embodiment of divine revelation.

For a modern, and especially for a Protestant, such a mystic devotion as Dante's to Beatrice is hard to comprehend. She was to him, in all likelihood, both a real being and a symbol; but her allegorical value, as it became ever more distinct, progressively etherealized his image of her human self, until at last her bodily form served only to lend visible beauty to an abstract principle. At the beginning, we may imagine a poetic boy rapt in dreamy, remote adoration of a living maiden who has crost his path; at the end, we find a stern moralist

whose conception of a theological idea is still sweetly colored by constant association with that youthful vision. Even we Americans of to-day have at least one mystic symbol, our flag, the emblem of patriotism. Were our country flagless, we could love her, no doubt, but our love would seem formless and unfocust. Our worship of the stars and stripes, based on symbolism and confirmed by association, impels us to attribute to the bunting a beauty and a sacredness which really belong to the emotion it represents. We have proceeded from the abstract to the concrete; Dante naturally moved in the opposite direction. Suppose a fanciful child, as he watcht a banner fluttering in the breeze, had thought it the loveliest thing in the world, had convinced himself that to stand gazing at it, or to do it service, was the only genuine happiness; and then, as he grew older, had little by little come to look upon it as the embodiment of fatherland: that would have been Dante's course. Some nations, just as patriotic as ourselves, have never developt the cult of the flag. To a German, for instance, our religious attitude toward a piece of cloth may seem as unreal, or as idolatrous, as Dante's regard for Beatrice may appear to a Puritan.

In 1290, when Dante was twenty-five, Beatrice died, at the age of twenty-four. A morbid depression then settled for a while upon her spiritual lover; and a craving (which had never been quite absent) for the pleasures of life possest him, as he thought, unduly. Seeking protection in study, he soon became immerst in

philosophy, theology, and science. Some four years after his lady's death, he collected into a little book a considerable number of his publisht poems and surrounded them with a connecting and explanatory prose narrative, making of the whole a sort of psychological novel in autobiographic form. The basis is a series of real experiences, interpreted, however, in accordance with his maturer thought and with a certain preconceived purpose. This purpose is to show how all his youth was dominated by his mystic love of Beatrice. The *Vita Nuova* begins with his first sight of her, at the age of nine, and ends with the triumph of her memory over an incipient affection for a young person who had pitied him in his bereavement. The central feature is a delirious dream foreboding the death of his beloved; as a solemn climax comes eventually the fulfilment of that prophecy. Emotional incidents and reflections—some familiar, some strange—make up the story: the first greeting of his lady, when he was eighteen; his first poem about her, an allegorical sonnet, which he sent to various men of letters; his attentions to two other ladies, intended to conceal his real devotion to Beatrice; the refusal of the latter to notice him, on account of his bad reputation; her mockery of him; his resolve to exclude the thought of self from his worship of her; the death of her father, and the poet's sympathetic distress; her beneficent influence on all about her; the desolation that ensues on her departure from this world; the successful struggle against a rising inclination which

seemed disloyal; the elevation of his soul to Beatrice's heavenly home; his determination to prepare himself to erect to her such a monument as never was consecrated to woman. The sweetness of the verse, the daintiness and studied simplicity of the prose, a discreet vagueness that seems to envelop the work in a cloud of mystery—all these things lend the *New Life* a charm to be found nowhere else.

After not many years, Dante wedded Gemma Donati, who bore him two sons and two daughters. Of his family life we are told nothing. We do learn, however, that he became heavily involved in debt. At about the same time, he began to manifest an interest in politics, having already seen some trying service as a soldier. Inasmuch as a new and very democratic constitution had restricted important office to members of trade unions, Dante enrolled himself in the rich guild of doctors and apothecaries, perhaps because his elderly friend Brunetto Latini had become a druggist, perhaps because the guild included also booksellers and painters. But tho he became a member of two popular municipal councils, and of a special commission, his name for several years turns up seldom in the records. Not until 1300 did he rise to real prominence in public affairs. Then he revealed himself as an uncompromising champion of domestic order and independence of papal control. Pope Boniface VIII was scheming to gain possession of Florence. A scandalous conspiracy was discovered in April, and the three guilty Florentines who plotted against their city were con-

demned to pay a huge fine and to have their right hands cut off. A few days later Dante was sent as ambassador to the neighboring town of San Gemignano, to invite that community to participate in the choice of a new captain of the confederation of cities known as the Guelf League; his mission was successful. Internal as well as external danger impended. Fierce enmity had developt in the city between the parties called Blacks and Whites. The first represented the old, arrogant aristocracy, eager to regain its former privileges and to crush the democracy; to attain its ends, it was as ready for violence as for collusion with the Pope. The second, which was made up of the new gentility of wealth and drew its adherents from the great commercial and industrial classes, stood for establisht order and popular government. Head of the first was Corso Donati, a kinsman of Dante's wife; prominent in the second was our poet's "first friend," himself a gifted poet and scholar, Guido Cavalcanti. The trouble seems to have arisen in the main from family rivalry between the Black Donati and the Cerchi, leaders of the Whites. While Dante's sympathy was rather with the people's party, he opposed lawlessness on either side.

The conditions in Florence at that time were peculiarly favorable to the development and the recognition of talent. Ancient as its civilization was, stretching back behind the dawn of history, that culture was now in process of swift transformation. New ideas, new aspirations were shaping it afresh, without changing its

fundamental character. Among the free cities that had grown up in northern and central Italy, Florence was winning a foremost place. Manufactures and commerce were expanding beyond all previous expectation. Banking had been invented. Wealth and immigrants were pouring in. Fashionable society was forming; the arts were eagerly cultivated. The graces of refinement had all the fascination of novelty. Distinguisht men from outside had dealings with the little republic. The young king, Charles Martel, grandson of Charles of Anjou, was received there with unprecedented splendor. Even the unhappy dissensions that rent the population offered abundant opportunities for leadership. The town was big enough to afford a field for every sort of activity, and small enough for every man to know his neighbor. Moreover, the government, which was frequently reorganized, was based on the principle of checks and divided functions, so that the number of public offices was very large, while the terms were short. The year 1300 found the principal executive authority vested in a council of six Priors, who were elected for only two months.

On June 15 of that fateful year Dante became a Prior. The situation was difficult in the extreme. The Pope had been uttering dire threats against Florence, and had sent one of his cardinals, Matteo d'Acquasparta, as an ostensible peacemaker to that city. To the new council was left the execution of the sentence against the three papal conspirators mentioned above. Within a fort-

night there were once more bloody tumults in the streets; whereupon the Priors condemned to banishment the leaders of both factions, among them Dante's friend, Cavalcanti. The Whites obeyed, and Calavcanti, in his brief exile, contracted a fever of which he died; but the Blacks, relying on the protection of the cardinal, refused to go. At this juncture, Dante, his short term over, apparently joined the mighty host of pilgrims that flockt to Rome for the great papal jubilee of 1300, which is said to have brought together the largest crowd that the city has ever seen.

In the spring of 1301 Dante was a member of an electoral commission, and, later, supervisor of a piece of street-making. We find him speaking three or four times in the council, once in opposition to the cardinal's demand for a hundred troopers. Meanwhile, however, the Pope, devising a way to subjugate the city, had invited Charles of Valois, brother of the French king, to take possession of Florence and restore peace. The Florentines, who knew what that signified, sent, as a forlorn hope, a delegation to Rome to plead with Boniface; one of this small company is said to have been Dante. Their plea was unavailing. Charles entered Florence and immediately turned it over to the Blacks, who sackt the houses of their opponents. A new mayor was named by the Pope, and Florence became for a time a papal city. The cardinal, who forthwith returned to Florence, joined the new mayor in planning a campaign of vengeance. In January, 1302, Dante and other

recent officials were accused of sundry crimes and condemned to pay a heavy fine, suffer two years' exile and confiscation of their property, and present themselves to the court within three days. Since none of them was rash enough to comply with this last condition, they were in March sentenced to death by fire. A persecution of the other Whites followed, and Charles of Valois finally departed.

Dante now became a wanderer. His family did not follow him into exile. Three of his children were with him, at the close of his life, in Ravenna, where one daughter was a nun and one of the two sons held ecclesiastical office; but his wife, and his city, he never saw again. Yet his hope of return never entirely vanisht. In the first years of their banishment the outcast Whites held together, and moved heaven and earth to obtain restoration, appealing for help to outlaws of an earlier date and to cities hostile to Florence. Their principal gathering-place was Bologna. In 1303 an army set out from Romagna to attack Florence; its prompt defeat begat dissension and bitter recrimination among the Whites, and Dante left them in disgust. He was probably not with them in 1304, when another gallant expedition met with disaster. In that year he was doubtless in Verona, a guest of the noble Scaligeri. For some time after that, we know little of his whereabouts; but he must have visited many parts of the country, especially the north. In 1306 he was in Lunigiana, in northwestern Italy, with the Malaspina family, for whom

we find him drawing up an act of agreement with a neighboring bishop. Soon after, he seems to have been in the upper Arno valley. There is a story, told by both Villani and Boccaccio, that he visited the University of Paris; yet the lack of direct evidence makes the statement hard to believe. In 1315, or thereabouts, he was probably in Lucca. In 1311 he had been expressly excepted from a proclamation of amnesty; and in 1315 his sentence was renewed. It is said that he refused to accept a pardon conditioned on a fine and a public penance—a high-spirited act, explained in a letter attributed to him and addrest to a Florentine friend.

Various letters by Dante, all in Latin, have come down to us. One group of thrilling epistles had its origin in a political event that aroused all Italy and awakened in the exiled poet hopes never to be fulfilled. In 1309 Henry of Luxemburg was crowned Emperor as Henry VII, and presently descended into the peninsula to right wrongs and restore order. From Dante's wild enthusiasm we may judge how bitter must have been his disappointment when, in 1313, his hero died, his mission unaccomplisht. After various journeys, once more he took refuge with the Scaligeri in Verona, where his patron was now young Can Grande della Scala, elected in 1318 Captain General of the Ghibelline League in Lombardy, a valiant commander, a liberal host, a patron of letters, a protector of exiles from all quarters of Italy. Perhaps it was the very fulness of his hospitality that induced Dante to accept—just at what date is not known—an invitation

from the lord of Ravenna, Guido Novello da Polenta, a nephew of Francesca da Rimini. Here he found a quieter court and scholarly surroundings. Early in 1320 he probably gave a public lecture in Verona; but he may have been already establisht in Ravenna at that time. It was doubtless in this year that he received from a famous classicist of Bologna, Giovanni del Virgilio, an epistle in Latin versè, counseling him to compose an epic in that language, and holding out the prospect of a laurel crown from the great Bolognese university. Dante replied in a polisht Latin eclogue, to which Giovanni responded in another, begging him to visit his city; in a closing eclogue Dante excused himself. The tone of these poems, written shortly before his death, is serene and cheerful. One more event, however, was to disturb his peace. Venice was preparing to make war on Ravenna, and Dante was sent on an embassy to avert the disaster. On his return he died, in September (or, according to another authority, in August), 1321, in his fifty-seventh year. His grave is still the chief glory of Ravenna.

The great Florentine chronicler, Giovanni Villani, formerly Dante's neighbor, pays his illustrious fellow-townsman a brief but earnest tribute. Of his bearing, Villani says (in H. E. Napier's version): "This Dante, from his knowledge, was somewhat presumptuous, harsh, and disdainful, like an ungracious philosopher; he scarcely deigned to converse with laymen. But for his other virtues, science, and worth as a citizen, it seems

but reasonable to give him perpetual remembrance in this our chronicle." Boccaccio, who wrote a life of Dante, deriving his information in part from several persons who had known the man, gives us this description of his appearance (the translation is by J. R. Smith): "Our poet was of moderate height, and, after reaching maturity, was accustomed to walk somewhat bowed, with a slow and gentle pace, clad always in such sober dress as befitted his ripe years. His face was long, his nose aquiline, and his eyes rather large than small. His jaws were large, and the lower lip protruded beyond the upper. His complexion was dark, his hair and beard thick, black, and curled, and his expression ever melancholy and thoughtful." This picture may be a little colored by the current conception of a sage. Virgil, for instance, in the Old French *Image du monde*, written in the first half of the thirteenth century, appears as a small thin man, who walkt bent, his eyes fixt on the ground. "His manners," continues Boccaccio, "whether in public or at home, were wonderfully composed and restrained, and in all his ways he was more courteous and civil than any one else." About a century after the poet's death, a scholar named Lionardo Bruni composed a biography more critical than Boccaccio's, in which he declares (J. R. Smith): "He was a man of great refinement; of medium height, and a pleasant but deeply serious face. He spoke only seldom, and then slowly, but was very subtle in his replies." In earlier life he was "courteous, spirited, and full of courage; he took

part in every youthful exercise; and in the great and memorable battle of Campaldino, Dante, young but well esteemed, fought vigorously, mounted and in the front rank." While he devoted himself fervently to his studies, he "omitted naught of polite and social intercourse. It was remarkable that, altho he studied incessantly, none would have supposed from his happy manner and youthful way of speaking that he studied at all." It is this younger Dante that Giotto, in all probability, portrayed, among other figures, in the famous fresco in the Bargello. A noble face, beardless, strong, intelligent, pensive, with features that might well have developt into the more pronounced type described by Boccaccio. Other likenesses exist, some of them very divergent from this, but none has an equal claim to authenticity.

Both before and after his banishment, Dante had continued to write lyric verse, much of which is extant. Its excellence would assure him immortality, even if he had left us nothing else. But in the middle of his career philosophy, sacred and profane, attracted him most. We have seen him, after the death of Beatrice, absorbed in study; and an eager student he remained all the rest of his life. Cicero and Boethius were his first teachers, from whom he soon proceeded to all accessible masters of thought and science. Lady Philosophy became his mistress. Her bodily symbol was the compassionate lady whom we met near the close of the *Vita Nuova*. Having accumulated a huge store of knowledge, he felt

impelled to share his hoard with his fellow-men. Therefore he planned a long didactic work, the *Convivio*, or *Banquet*, to be written in the vernacular, that all might partake of the feast. It was to be in fifteen books, one introductory, the others discursive commentaries on fourteen of his longer lyrics. For he had a secondary motive in publishing this treatise: namely, to disclose the real nature of certain of his allegorical poems to Lady Philosophy, which, being ostensibly amatory, were open to misconstruction. The *Convivio* was never finisht. We have only the first five books, with three *canzoni*. What other poems he meant to interpret, and whether they are among his extant works, we do not know. Most interesting are his discussions of the use of the mother tongue, of allegory, and of politics. His expositions of philosophy and science often throw much light on his *Divine Comedy*.

The *Banquet*, as we have it, seems to have been written between 1304 and 1308. In this same period he began a Latin treatise on poetic composition in Italian, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, which he left incomplete. It is likely that both these works were interrupted by his excitement over the election and the ill-fated expedition of Henry VII. Three other Latin writings have come to us under his name, the *Monarchia*, the scientific *Quæstio de Aqua et Terra*, and the literary Epistle to Can Grande; but the authenticity of the second and third has been disputed. If, as is likely, they are his, they belong to his last years: the *Quæstio* is the already

mentioned lecture in Verona; the Epistle accompanied the first canto of the *Paradiso*. As to the date of the *Monarchia*, opinions vary; such evidence as we have points rather to the close of his life. The book deals with his theory of the function of the Empire and its relation to the Papacy.

The time when Dante composed the *Divine Comedy*, his masterpiece, is also doubtful. That he had such a work in mind in 1294 is evident from the closing words of the *Vita Nuova*. There is testimony that he did not complete it until the very end of his life. During all the intervening period he doubtless pondered over it, perhaps now and then wrote; he may even have made some portions public. Perhaps, while he was busy with the *Convivio*, he laid it aside. But the poem as it now exists is so firmly knit, so powerfully mature, that one is disposed to attribute its final composition to his closing years. It is written in a metrical form invented by himself, the *terza rima*. There are three parts: *Inferno*, or *Hell; Purgatorio*, or *Purgatory; Paradiso*, or *Paradise*. After a canto introductory to the whole, each part, or *cantica*, consists of thirty-three cantos. These are of varying length—on the average, some 140 lines. The author designated the entire poem a *Commedia*, or "comedy": that is, a work with a happy ending and not written in the elevated "tragic" style. Posterity has attacht to it the epithet "divine." It is a spiritual autobiography in the allegorical shape of a journey through the three realms of the departed, a story of remorse,

recognition of sin, reformation, and exaltation of the soul to God. Incidentally it contains a description of the universe, a host of portraits, an abundance of historical and mythological reference, and a statement of the principal doctrines of theology and philosophy. Above all, it gives us a picture of the sublimest of poets in his relations to man and to God. An account of it will be found in the last chapter of this book.

So much for Dante's life, his private, political, and literary career. Meagre indeed is our knowledge of his person and his acts. Why is he such a living presence to-day? Why, after six centuries and all the changes they have brought, does he hold the reader with such an unrelaxing grip? There are three reasons: his character, his literary power, his relation to his age. We love him for his healthy, manly vigor, for the intensity of his emotions, for his positiveness, his fixt moral standard, his unswerving faith. We admire his soaring imagination, his strange union of mystic idealism with clear vision of reality in all its details, his constructive skill, his deftness in portraiture, his command of the resources of diction and of verse. We are fascinated by his exhibition of the deeds, the thoughts, the beliefs, the passions of a far distant day. His personality and his literary potency can be appreciated only by direct or indirect contact with his work. The many illustrative passages scattered through this volume may afford some idea of the man and the poet. For an estimate of his significance as spokesman for his time, a considerable

acquaintance with that period is indispensable. Dante is the mouthpiece of the Middle Ages. No other one man so embodies a whole vast epoch. In him alone does Medievalism in its many phases find adequate expression. This study will therefore take the form of an examination of various aspects of medieval life and their representation in our author. He will be shown among his contemporaries, in touch with his predecessors. We shall see how the final word comes from him.

CHAPTER II

SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

SOMETIMES one asks one's self how the men of the future will describe our times. We speak of Classical Antiquity, of the Dark and the Middle Ages, of the Renaissance, of Neo-Classicism; and all these terms contain, in a vague way, our impression of the period named. In one respect they curiously agree. Most, or all, of the titles seem to have reference to the condition of scholarship, literature, and art. Now, when an epithet shall be chosen to designate the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we may suspect that, unless it be of a negative character, it will not be drawn from the vocabulary of learning, art, or letters. Not that these pursuits have been neglected. Knowledge of external things has accumulated with such appalling rapidity as to upset all our notions of education. Architecture is even now wrestling with the problem of the skyscraper, which may prove to be a not altogether unworthy rival of the Gothic cathedral and the Greek temple. Authors with a clear right to enduring fame have not been unduly scarce. Nevertheless, our achievement in these fields will doubt-

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less look small to the eyes of the thirtieth century, whether it be compared to the corresponding output of Classical Antiquity and the Renaissance, or to our own activities in the line of applied science, manufacture, transportation, commerce, and finance, with the resulting social transformations. Ours will be known as the Industrial Age; and the name will credit our period not only with a development of industries such as the world had never before imagined, but also with the evolution of the industrial worker.

If we are essentially an industrial generation, it is natural enough that the keen and eager intellects of our day should turn to material things, to the things that our time peculiarly cherishes. In these, fame and power are to be won. What are the scholar, the poet, the painter, even the statesman and the soldier, beside the "captain of industry"? In every age the conspicuous reward will fall to him who best produces the article most coveted by his contemporaries; and the ablest minds, if correspondingly ambitious, will strike for the biggest recompense. When we survey the history of the Ancients, the names that stand forth are those of fighters and rulers, with a few writers. Pericles, Alexander, Scipio, Cæsar, Augustus—such are the figures that present themselves, backt by Homer, Cicero, Virgil. Warfare was incessant in the little world that was unfolding its splendid civilization. Defense, expansion, wise direction were the dominant needs, and all the Muses attended their fulfilment. In their concert the patriotic

note is loudest. During the Renaissance, artists and authors are seen in the lead, monarchs and navigators following close after. Lionardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Petrarch, Ariosto, Rabelais, Shakspere, with Francis I, Elizabeth, Columbus. Glory is the idol of the day, and art its favorite offering. What do we find in the Middle Ages, the period we are about to examine? What are the mighty names and the eternal monuments of that time? Let us first call forth those dominant personalities which, bearing plainest the impress of their epoch, have best preserved their greatness in ours. Charlemagne, St. Bernard, St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Chaucer—mostly saints! Even Charlemagne was canonized. And next, the superb Gothic piles that rise before our mind's eye—nearly all churches. It is the age of religion. To theology the best intellects turned as instinctively as in our day they are drawn to high finance. Had the great business organizer who has recently past away lived in the thirteenth century, he would naturally have been an ecclesiastic, an eminent theologian, a pillar of the Church; and St. Thomas, were he now alive, might well be a railway magnate. War was also an absorbing interest; but war itself, as in the Crusades, readily assumed a holy character. Charlemagne was a defender of the faith, and so were Richard I of England and Louis IX of France. Kings as well as Popes were servants of God. Science and philosophy were valued as auxiliaries of theology; all meet in the vast library of that Aristotle of post-classical

times, Albertus Magnus. In literature the really serious work is largely devoted to sacred things. In art, as we have seen, the Church claims all the best. If ours is the Industrial, theirs is the Religious age.

To picture any generation of human beings as given over exclusively to one pursuit would be no less absurd than to think of all contemporary men as looking or speaking alike. The mere attachment of a blanket label, such as "Dark," or "Neo-Classic," tho convenient, is unfair and a bit misleading. The Renaissance, like our own season, knew great wars and marvelous discoveries. To many of its sons exploration, conquest, and colonization must have appeared its principal function; to others, scientific experiment. Yet to our long-range view the cult of beauty seems to have dominated all else, and we call those times the epoch of New Birth, not of Expansion. Similarly, no doubt, our latter-day mechanical and social growth will so impress the future student that he will be inclined to overlook our contributions to pure science, to warfare, to hygiene, to fiction, and to various kinds of art.

Medievalism, then, means something besides religion. Church was, indeed, supreme, dogma unshaken, men's thoughts and conduct were powerfully shaped by ecclesiastical influence. But these same men found time not only for a deal of ungodly blood-spilling, but also for secular work and pastime of a more humane sort. They developt the vast feudal system, based on the principle of loyalty—loyal service and loyal protection—every

member of the community, between the highest and the lowest, bound to give and to receive unquestioning obedience. The organization of society resembled, therefore, that of an army; and an army it really was, supported by a population of agricultural serfs. As the years went on, however, a disturbing factor appeared: towns and cities grew up, swarming with a new brood of people, artisans and tradesmen, who had no proper place in the military scheme, and by their increasing numbers and strength prepared its downfall. All over Europe the twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw a rapid development of municipal corporations founded on privileged exemption and on trade monopoly; in northern Italy, indeed, most of the towns reacht municipal organization by the eleventh century. Meanwhile, in the great armed castles of the aristocracy, during intervals of peace, a spirit of refinement was gradually diffused. Gentlemen and ladies met for courtly diversion. Beside the sanguinary tournament, the dangerous hunt, and the gentle sport of falconry, still gentler amusements came into vogue: dancing, music, poetry, indoor games, all destined to leave an indelible impress on European civilization. Schools and scholarship remained in the hands of the clergy. This body was, however, in close and familiar contact with the laity, being so numerous that wellnigh every family, of high or low degree, counted at least one member among the churchmen. In the institution of knighthood, and in the enthusiasm of the crusades, the courtly and the religious element

were blended; and through their union chivalry was born.

The taste of the aristocratic society of those days is revealed by the fiction it perused, and this fiction often presents to us an idealized image of the society itself. As is always the case in the early stages of artistic development, verse, in the Middle Ages, preceded prose as a literary medium, and we must not be surprised to find the medieval novel written in rime. Then, as later, narrative literature throve best on Gallic soil. Throughout the Middle Ages France was the literary centre of Europe, as she became once more in the Neo-Classic period; from her, art radiated in all directions. Let it be noted here that for a hundred years after the Norman Conquest England must be regarded almost as French territory. While southern France led the world in love-song, northern Gaul, more constantly bellicose, less exposed to softening influences, was the home of the epic. From the south, the lyric movement made its way to many lands; and from this medieval song our modern lyric poetry is in the main descended. From the north, both epic and romantic tales in verse traveled through all western Europe, and attired themselves now in German, now in Scandinavian, now in English, now in Italian or Spanish dress, being exalted to a foremost place even in those Teutonic lands that had a noble epic tradition of their own. They form the principal source of the modern novel.

Much obscurity surrounds the beginnings of French

narrative verse. We find the epic, apparently full-grown, in the eleventh century. Before that, nothing of literary consequence survives except a few lives of saints. Most of the heroic poems that have come down to us were written in the twelfth century and the thirteenth, and are apparently the work of clerics or of minstrels in close touch with the Church. While they deal primarily with feats of arms, they are apt to savor strongly of religion. Monasteries and shrines seem to have been their especial breeding-places; and they are locally associated with the highways which swarms of pilgrims followed, year after year. The kings of France are favorite heroes, and so are the great vassals. Charlemagne is the most impressive figure; but nearly as important is William, Count of Orange. The former appears as a majestic, white-bearded Emperor in the *Chanson de Roland*, probably the best-known of these epics—a tragic account of the treachery of Ganelon, which results in an unexpected onslaught of the Moors on the French rear-guard and the death of Roland, nephew of the king, with his friend Oliver, the other peers, and the whole band. William of Orange, another valiant fighter of the Moslem, is seen to advantage in *Aliscans* and in the poem that bears his name. Despite the part played by William's brave wife, womankind has in general little place in such stern tales of battle; yet one more dauntless wife does attain heroic proportions in the borderland poem of *Girart de Rossilho*, which tells of the long contest of a mighty vassal against King Charles the Bald. Sometimes we

find in these "chronicle-songs," or *chansons de geste*, elements derived originally from another type of narration. In *Huon de Bordeaux*, for instance, much prominence is given to enchantment, and to the powerful dwarf Oberon, who combines the functions of sorcerer and monarch of a fairy realm.

Magic, love, ladies, courtesy are the chief ingredients of the metrical romances, which came into vogue in the second half of the twelfth century. These differ from the epics not only in substance but in form. The *chansons de geste*, written in monorimed strophes, were chanted to a monotonous tune by professional performers. The *romans* were composed in rimed couplets, had no music, and were intended to be read, particularly by the gentler sex, like the novels of to-day. They were recognized as consisting largely of fiction, while the epics were presented as history. What is said of the *romans*, or novels, is true also of the shorter tales called *lais*. King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table, transported, no one knows exactly whence nor how, into French literature, met with universal favor, and their adventures constantly grew. To this cycle were attacht the immortal love-story of Tristan and Isolde and the mysterious tales of the Holy Grail.

Beside the Arthurian matter, the vicissitudes of Troy, Thebes, and Rome afforded fascinating subjects, and so did the strange experiences of Alexander the Great. Occasionally such themes were treated in Latin verse, as in the twelfth century *Alexandreis*, a work in 5,464

hexameters by Gautier de Lille, read far and wide in the schools. The Trojan War was known, not directly from Homer, who was little more than a name and a learned tradition, but for the most part from two Latin prose accounts (one of them, at least, originally in Greek) which purported to give the testimony of two eye-witnesses, Dares the Phrygian on the Trojan side, Dictys of Crete on the Greek. Similarly the medieval tales of Alexander come from an extravagant Greek romance (also Latinized), which goes under the name of Callisthenes. ✓In addition to the sources mentioned, Byzantine and other Oriental stores provided a good many episodes and plots, such as that of the exquisite *Aucassin et Nicolette.* Real life, too, furnisht some share: the Provençal *Flamenca* is a sentimental novel of contemporary society. Beside the longer narratives, there flourisht in verse and in prose the short story, which reacht its full development under Chaucer and Boccaccio. From France was drawn, with other romantic themes, the substance of the Italian *Deeds of Cæsar,* the *Accounts of Ancient Knights,* the primarily oriental *Seven Sages,* and some of the anecdotes contained in the early collection known as the *Novellino.*

The most noted French writer of Arthurian romances was Chrétien de Troyes, who, at the court of Champagne, wrote of Lancelot, of Yvain and Gawain, of Erec and Enid, of Percival, of King Mark; in his *Cligès* he developt an eastern theme; in his *Guillaume d'Angleterre,* a pious legend. Of the stories of antiquity, the

best perhaps is the long *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Sainte-More. This book was known in some form to Dante and, with the *Æneid*, shaped his conception of the siege of Troy. It was turned by Guido delle Colonne into a Latin history, the *Historia Destructionis Trojæ*, which in turn was promptly translated into Italian. Mainly through the medium of Guido's version, the sentimental tale of Troilus and Cressida past from Benoît to Boccaccio, to Chaucer, to Shakspere.

A considerable part of the epics and romances are capital reading even to-day—and not difficult, for Old French is an easy language. But, after enjoying a vogue of a century or two, they ceased to please the medieval French taste, and minstrels were obliged to carry them abroad, notably to northeastern Italy, where they gave rise to a curious literature composed in a mixture of French and Venetian. At home, in order to retain favor, the old stories had to be made over, combined into lengthy series, and transformed to prose. In this shape they are still popular among French children under the name of the *Bibliothèque bleue*, just as the Tuscan fourteenth or fifteenth century prose version called the *Reali di Francia* is still the favorite book of the Italian working people. It was, in all probability, the French prose romance of Lancelot of the Lake that Dante's Francesca and Paolo were reading together when they first discovered their mutual affection. The souls of these immortal lovers, still united, come before Dante in his descent through Hell:

Then turning, I to them my speech address'd,
And thus began: "Francesca! your sad fate
Even to tears my grief and pity moves.
But tell me, in the time of your sweet sighs,
By what, and how, Love granted that ye knew
Your yet uncertain wishes!" She replied:
"No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when misery is at hand. That kens
Thy learn'd instructor. Yet so eagerly
If thou art bent to know the primal root
From whence our love gat being, I will do
As one who weeps and tells his tale. One day,
For our delight, we read of Lancelot,
How him love thrall'd. Alone we were, and no
Suspicion near us. Oft-times by that reading
Our eyes were drawn together, and the hue
Fled from our alter'd cheek. But at one point
Alone we fell. When of that smile we read,
The wishèd smile, so rapturously kiss'd
By one so deep in love, then he, who ne'er
From me shall separate, at once my lips
All trembling kiss'd. The book and writer both
Were love's purveyors. In its leaves that day
We read no more." While thus one spirit spake,
The other wail'd so sorely, that heart-struck
I, through compassion fainting, seem'd not far
From death, and like a corse fell to the ground.

[*Hell*, v: Cary.]

Here we have the very quintessence of gentle love. But such a refinement of the emotions was not to remain an exclusive possession of the gentry. Before the

end of our period, all the elegances acquired and practist by the warlike nobles in their strongholds were copied by wealthy burghers in the towns. This is true especially of Italy, where culture was essentially urban. Courtesy was practist almost as sedulously as religion, love was exalted to worship, honor was no longer an attribute of the well-born alone. Some daring spirits went so far as to maintain the paradox that true nobility depends neither on birth nor on riches, but on character. Juvenal had affirmed as much in his *Eighth Satire*, and in the Middle Ages a few Provençal and Italian poets ventured, in passing, to make the assertion on their own account; but Dante was the first literary man to prove it by systematic argumentation. This he does in the third ode of his *Convivio*, a curious specimen of concise logic set to swift and intricate metre. Chaucer followed him in the Wife of Bath's Tale.

A certain Emperor, says our poet, once defined nobility as the ancient possession of wealth, combined with fine conduct. This qualification was deprived of its second element, the "fine conduct," by a less knowing successor, who perhaps lackt it himself; and the world, following him, calls a man noble whose family has been opulent for a long time, even if the man himself is of no account. But in reality he who has had every opportunity and profits not thereby is evidently basest of all. Let us go back to the Emperor's definition. If one should describe man as "animate wood," the statement

would be both false, because man is not wood, and incomplete, because it does not include the essential attribute, "rational." Similarly, our Emperor's phrase is both untrue and defective. It is untrue because nothing can be given by a giver who does not possess the gift. Money is vile, as we see from its effect upon men: therefore it cannot bestow nobility. The defectiveness of the statement is shown thus: its partisans all assert that the son of a noble father must be noble, the son of a commoner, common. In that case, it would seem that we must all be of the same rank, since all of us spring from Adam. The definition offers no solution of this difficulty. Let us set it aside and consider for ourselves what nobility is, and how it can be recognized. Moral virtue, according to Aristotle, is essentially "an elective habit" that leads us invariably to choose the golden mean between two vicious extremes—one of excess, one of insufficiency. For instance, the moderate man avoids both prodigality and avarice. Now, we use the word *virtue* always to designate something good; and we use *nobility* for a like purpose. Nobility and virtue must, then, be connected; and if we find that one of the two terms is more comprehensive than the other, we may safely assume that the greater includes the smaller. On consideration, we do discover that certain attributes (such as bashfulness in young people and in ladies) are comprised in nobility, tho not classified as virtues. It follows that nobility, being more inclusive, is the source of virtue; and no man who is not virtuous may be called

noble. Nobility is a special gift of God, bestowed on a fair soul dwelling harmoniously in a fair body. It manifests itself by various tokens appropriate to the different ages of man: in adolescence, by obedience, gentleness, modesty, with the physical beauty of comely proportion; in youth, by temperance, strength, love, courtly praise, and loyalty; in old age, by prudence, justice, bounty, and delight in other men's success; in declining years, by return to God in expectation of the approaching end, and by satisfaction with the past. This is Dante's argument, and his conclusion. To such a lofty standard of character could a lay citizen attain!

And yet, after all his protestation, Dante could not repress in his own heart a worldly satisfaction in his descent from a knightly crusader. In the fifteenth canto of the *Paradiso* he pictures his encounter, in the heaven of Mars, with the soul of his great-great-grandfather, Cacciaguida, who describes to him the sturdy old Florence of earlier days and foretells the poet's exile. It was in the sacred war of 1147 that knighthood had been conferred on Cacciaguida, in the Holy Land, by Conrad III. On learning the earthly rank of his ancestral shade, Dante addresses it no longer with "thou," but with the respectful plural, "ye," a trick of speech first devised (so it was thought) to glorify imperial Cæsar in Rome, the papal city where the Emperor is now least honored. Beatrice, the spirit-guide, observing her charge's harmless complacency, smiles indulgently, even as the Lady of Mallehault, in the

romance of Lancelot of the Lake, coughed on hearing Queen Guinevere betray her love for the hero:

O petty human eminence of birth!
If thou dost gratify poor mortal's pride
Where human love is feeble, down on earth,
I ne'er shall marvel more, at any tide;
For in that place where hunger cannot stray,
I mean in Heaven, I was gratified.
Thou art a cloak that quickly shrinks away,
And Time goes clipping round it with his shears,
Unless it be patcht out from day to day.
With "ye," that word which Rome in former years
First authorized, my speech did I begin—
That "ye" which now the Roman least reveres.
And Beatrice did smile, as had she been
That dame who, waiting not far distant, coughed
When Guinevere ('tis written) first did sin.

[*Par.*, XVI.]

In this passage, and again and again in our poet, we see looming in the background the gigantic problem which dominated medieval politics and which, in Italy at least, shaped the development of society: the problem of the adjustment of Church and State. Side by side stood two great powers, both necessary, both venerable and holy, divinely ordained to last as long as man, and each of them professedly universal. At the head of the mighty ecclesiastical host towered the Pope, successor of St. Peter, to whom our Lord entrusted the keys; in command of the temporal chieftains of the

earth, the Emperor, who traced his title to Julius Cæsar. To us moderns the medieval Papacy may seem to have begun with Gregory the Great, at the end of the sixth century; for us, the medieval Empire came into being in 800, when Charlemagne was crowned in Rome by Leo III. Yet even as the Popes stretcht back in unbroken line to Peter, so the sequence of Emperors was in the Middle Ages lookt upon as uninterrupted from Cæsar to Charles, Goths and Franks appearing as predestined heirs of the Romans. Neither Church nor Empire doubted the divine origin or the divinely appointed function of the other; but over the question of temporal supremacy a long and bitter strife arose.

At first the two powers workt in harmony; then, as the ninth century went on, the Papacy assumed control of the temporal arm and awarded the imperial crown at will. A strong Emperor like Otto I, who came to the throne in 962, was able to reverse this practice. Otto, in fact, deposed two Popes. On the other hand an aggressive champion of the Church might subjugate a recalcitrant Emperor, as Gregory VII humiliated Henry IV at Canossa in 1077. Sometimes, as in the case of Barbarossa and Alexander III, in the twelfth century, two valiant rivals were almost evenly matcht. To justify the papal claim of over-lordship, a curious document was produced in the eighth century, and after the ninth became widely known—the so-called Donation of Constantine. That Emperor had, in fact, given the Church the right to hold property, and had probably turned

over to it some land; but the forged grant told a more sensational tale. Emperor Constantine, stricken with leprosy, summoned St. Sylvester from his cave on Mt. Soracte and, being cured by him, transferred to the Bishop of Rome ownership of "all provinces, places, and cities of Italy or of western regions." Dante, averse as he was to the secular dominion of the Popes, never questioned the authenticity of the paper, altho he did deny its validity. In the acceptance of earthly possessions—forbidden by Old Testament and New—he saw the beginning of clerical degeneracy.

> Ah, Constantine! What harm from thee hath flowed!
> Not thy conversion bred it, but the dower
> Upon our earliest wealthy sire bestowed.
>
> [*Hell*, XIX.]

The Emperors were Teuton princes, and, as a rule, were kings of Germany. In the twelfth century there entered into the imperial blood a new strain which bound the Empire still closer to Italy. Constance, heiress of those Normans who, while their kinsmen were conquering England, in a series of extraordinary campaigns had subdued all southern Italy and Sicily, was married to Henry VI of Hohenstaufen, son of Barbarossa. Her child was Frederick II, the third and last "storm-wind" of the Swabian dynasty. According to a false but generally accredited legend, she had been torn from a convent and compelled to wed. Dante believed the story. In Paradise the Empress is pointed

out to him by Piccarda Donati, a nun who had suffered like violence.

> This soul can tell the same unhappy tale.
> A sister she; and from her cloistered head
> Was stript the shadow of the sacred veil.
> But when once more, reluctant, she was led
> Into the world, subversively of right,
> The veil that wrapt her heart she never shed.
> Great Constance is the soul that shines so bright;
> She, wedded to the second Swabian blast,
> Conceived the third, the end of Swabia's might.
>
> [*Paradise*, III.]

Frederick II, son of Henry VI and Constance, and therefore heir to Swabia and the Two Sicilies, was by birth an Italian, having come into the world at Iesi in the March of Ancona. Left an orphan at the age of four, he was brought up as a ward of Innocent III, the most powerful of all Popes, without whose protection the child would doubtless have fared ill. Innocent saw to it that Frederick was made in turn King of the Romans, King of Naples and Sicily, King of Germany, and Emperor. He was crowned at Aix in 1215, and five years later had a second coronation in Rome, under Pope Honorius III, Innocent's successor. In spite of the early papal favor that had served him so well, the second half of his life was spent in conflict with the Holy See; he was four times excommunicated, and his later years were troubled by incessant wars instigated by successive Popes. Both Papacy and the Lombard

League were against him in his attempts to weld Italy and Germany into one Empire. The hostility of the Holy See was first aroused by his failure to keep a promise made by him at his accession. He had then pledged himself to embark at once on a crusade. This project was put off from year to year, as home affairs seemed to require his attention. When, at last, he proceeded to the fulfilment of his vow, his first two expeditions were failures. Finally, however, he did conduct a highly successful campaign in the Holy Land, winning Jaffa, Saida, Jerusalem, and Nazareth, and crowning himself King of Jerusalem. This was in 1228–29. Nevertheless, he was not forgiven. Twice after his return he was placed under the ban, and he was still out of favor at his death in 1250. The enmity of the Church was aggravated by his defiant attitude, his vast power, and his bad reputation as a free thinker and free liver. His court was the most splendid in Europe, a centre of culture, science, and philosophical speculation. There Italian poetry had its birth. Frederick, being not only a strong administrator and a wise general, but also a lover of luxury and a keen seeker for knowledge, drew to him the best talents of East and West. Asia and Europe met in his royal household. Much he did to introduce into the occident the wisdom of the Arabs, then perhaps the most civilized people in the world. His consorting with the heathen and his adoption of oriental customs made him an object of suspicion to the godly. Dante classed him among the heretics.

When Frederick died, in 1250, he left as heir his second son, Conrad IV, who survived him only four years. Conrad declared himself Emperor, and was supported by the imperial party; but the Pope and his faction favored William of Holland. Conrad is said to have died by poison. Before his accession and after his untimely death, the throne was occupied by a regent. This was his half-brother Manfred, an illegitimate son of Frederick II, who in 1258 was crowned king. Brave, handsome, courteous, he was the idol of the imperialists and the last champion of the Hohenstaufen race. In 1260, at the memorable battle of Montaperti, the supporters of the Empire routed their opponents, and came near annihilating hostile Florence. But six years after, Manfred was defeated and slain, in the great fight at Benevento, by the army of Charles of Anjou, whom the Church had summoned to Italy. Like his father, he died excommunicated. His soldiers covered his body, on the battlefield, with a pile of stones; Pope Clement IV, however, unwilling to allow his bones to rest undisturbed, sent to the spot the Cardinal-Archbishop of Cosenza, who had the king's remains dug up and cast out of the realm. Manfred's grandsons became kings of Sicily and Aragon. Dante, in the *Purgatorio*, meets the soul of this great warrior among those who died repentant but under the ban of the Church. These spirits are obliged to wait outside of Purgatory thirty times as long as their contumacy lasted.

And one began: "Whoe'er thou art, abide,
O thou that walkest on, look back again!
Hast ever seen me on the other side?"
I turned to him, and gazed with might and main.
Handsome and blond was he, a princely guest;
An ugly wound had cleft his brow in twain.
When I with proper meekness had confest
I ne'er had seen him, he exclaimed: "Now see!"
And showed a scar high up upon his breast.
"Manfred am I," he then said smilingly,
"Grandson of Empress Constance, Henry's wife.
And when thou shalt return, I beg of thee,
Seek out my beauteous daughter, who gave life
To Aragon's and Sicily's great lords;
Tell her the truth, if false report is rife.
When I was split by two death-dealing swords,
My rueful soul I weeping did resign
To him who gladly pardons and rewards.
My sins were horrible; but grace divine,
With loving, all-embracing arms outspread,
Takes every soul that doth to it incline.
And if Cosenza's shepherd, who was sped
By Clement on my track, revenge to reap,
That page of holy writ had rightly read,
My body's bones still peacefully would sleep
Near Benevento, where the bridge is past,
Protected by the ponderous stony heap.
Rain wets them now, and rattles them the blast,
Outside the realm, not far from Verde's cleft,
Where he, with lightless candles, had them cast.
No curse of theirs can leave us so bereft
That God's eternal love may not come back,
As long as hope hath any greenness left."

[*Purgatory*, III.]

In its death-struggle with the Empire, the Papacy, as we have just seen, invited a mighty foreigner to invade its own land. The result was destruction to the Swabian house, and the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. Charles I, Count of Anjou, the youngest son of Louis VIII of France, was a brother of St. Louis, with whom he shared the perils and hardships of a crusade, both brothers having been captured by the enemy. Later Charles proved his military skill by subduing revolts in southern France, and by campaigning for Margaret of Flanders. Before this, he had by his marriage with Beatrice, heiress of Provence, secured for himself great wealth and an additional title and county. To Dante it seemed that this new affluence brought corruption into the house of France, even as the gift of temporal possessions had undermined the morals of the Church. He puts these words into the mouth of Hugh Capet, founder of the line:

> Until Provence's too abundant dower
> Taught my descendants how to banish shame,
> They did no harm, and had but little power.
>
> [*Purgatory*, xx.]

To this prince the Sicilian throne was offered by Pope Urban IV, who wisht at any cost to be rid of the Hohenstaufen. Charles—"he of the masculine nose," as Dante calls him—descended into Italy, crusht Manfred at Benevento, and two years later, in 1268, defeated what was left of the imperial forces at Tagliacozzo. Here he

took prisoner the last representative of the Swabian line, Conradin, son of Conrad IV and grandson of Frederick II. This youthful heir, a lad of sixteen, he took to Naples and there put him to death. Secure, as he thought, upon his new throne, he set forth on a second crusade, which was cut short by a storm. His natural arrogance had been fed by success, and now became so offensive to the Papacy (which had made him what he was) that Pope Nicholas III deprived him of the offices of Roman senator and vicar-general of Italy. To prevent the recurrence of similar misunderstandings, Charles took measures that the next Pope should be one of his own people; he procured the election of his fellow-countryman, Martin IV, who promptly restored his titles. With the Swabians destroyed and the Papacy subjugated, he had reason to regard himself as master of the situation. But danger threatened from an unexpected quarter. The Sicilian people, exasperated beyond bounds by his cruel, extortionate government, rose in their fury, massacred as many Frenchmen as they could catch, and drove him from the island. This revolution, which occurred in 1282, is known as the Sicilian Vespers. The island then put itself under the charge of the good King Peter III of Aragon, and remained an Aragonese possession until 1504. To Charles's degenerate son, Charles II, the "Cripple of Jerusalem," was left the kingdom of Apulia. He was succeeded in 1309 by his son Robert, who seems to have been no better. The latter had, however, an attractive brother, Charles

Martel, who in 1294, just before his early death, apparently met Dante in Florence. In Paradise, where they meet again, he declares to the poet that he would have inherited Sicily,

> If evil government, which sore doth try
> The heart of subject peoples, had not moved
> Palermo's men to bellow: "Let them die!"
>
> [*Paradise*, VIII.]

After the Vespers, Charles of Anjou made a vain attack on Messina. He died in 1285.

Meanwhile the Empire was vacant. An interregnum ensued upon the death of Conrad IV of Hohenstaufen in 1254; then a conflict between two rival claimants, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and Alfonso, King of Castile. Not until 1273 was Rudolph of Hapsburg elected. Neither he nor his son, Albert I, who succeeded him in 1298, gave any heed to Italy. The Italians were, therefore, inclined to regard the throne as unoccupied during all these years.

> O German Albert, that dost put away
> The Italian steed which thou shouldst saddle here,
> And she all wild and riderless doth stray—
> May retribution in the stars appear
> Upon thy blood, so strange and plain to read
> That thy successor may have cause to fear!
> For thou and eke thy sire, possest by greed
> For German things up yonder, have allowed
> The Empire's garden-land to run to seed.
>
> [*Purgatory*, VI.]

Thousands of Dante's fellow-countrymen shared his longing for an imperial deliverer, whose strong arm should restore peace and justice in the troubled land. Sicily, as we have seen, had past into Spanish hands. Southern Italy was misruled by Charles II. In the northern and central parts of the peninsula, city was at war with city, and faction with faction, inside the same town; the municipalities, one after another, were falling into the clutches of petty usurpers and selfish tyrants. At this juncture hope dawned again. In 1308 Albert was murdered by his nephew, John the Parricide; and in the same year Henry of Luxemburg was elected Emperor, being supported by the Pope against the house of France. The next January he was crowned at Aix as Henry VII, and began to make preparations for a solemn descent into Italy as heir of the Cæsars. Henry was an idealist, with a lofty conception of his great mission. Arbiter of the world, and especially of Italy, he was to restore order and obedience. His coming was awaited in feverish excitement. An ecstatic Latin letter, almost certainly written by Dante at this juncture, begins as follows (the translations from Dante's political epistles are by Philip H. Wicksteed):

Lo now is the acceptable time wherein arise the signs of consolation and peace. For a new day beginneth to glow, showing forth the dawn which even now maketh less thick the darkness of our long calamity; and already the breezes of the east begin to blow, the lips of heaven glow red, and confirm the auspices of the nations with a gentle calm. And we, too, shall

see the looked-for joy, we who have kept vigil through the long night in the desert. For peace-bringing Titan shall arise, and Justice which hath languished, like the heliotrope without the sun, so soon as he shall brandish his first ray will revive again. All they who hunger and thirst shall be satisfied in the light of his rays, and they who love iniquity shall be confounded before his shining face. For the strong lion of the tribe of Judah hath lifted up his merciful ears, and taking pity on the wail of universal captivity hath raised up a second Moses to snatch his people from the burdens of the Egyptians, leading them to the land that floweth with milk and honey. Oh, Italy! to be pitied by the very Saracens, rejoice even now; for thou shalt be envied throughout the world; because thy bridegroom, the solace of the world and the glory of thy people, the most clement Henry, Divus and Augustus and Cæsar, is hastening to the bridal. Dry thy tears and take away the marks of grief, O thou fairest one; for nigh at hand is he who shall release thee from the prison of the impious, and, smiting the malicious, shall destroy them with the edge of the sword, and shall give out his vineyard to other husbandmen who shall render the fruit of Justice at time of harvest.

[Letter V, § § 1, 2.]

In September, 1310, Henry reacht Italy, and early the next year he received the iron crown at Milan. Soon after, Dante, now some nine years an exile from Florence, paid his respects to the Emperor, as we learn from another epistle:

And I too, who write for myself and for others, have seen thee, as beseems Imperial Majesty, most benignant, and have

heard thee most clement, when that my hands handled thy feet and my lips paid their debt. Then did my spirit exult in thee, and I spoke silently with myself "Behold the Lamb of God. Behold who hath taken away the sins of the world."

The keynote of this letter is impatience—indignant surprise at Henry's delay in marching on Florence:

But we marvel what may be the cause of this so slothful delay. Victor long ago in the valley of the Po thou dost desert, pass over, and neglect Tuscany, no otherwise than as though thou didst suppose the laws of the Empire thou hast to guard to be circumscribed by the boundaries of Liguria, not perceiving (as we suspect) that the power of the Romans is neither cramped within the limits of Italy nor the margin of three-cornered Europe.

. . . . . .

Dost thou delay at Milan, through Spring as well as Winter, and think to destroy the poisonous hydra by smiting off her heads? But hadst thou thought upon the mighty deeds of Alcides, thou wouldst have recognized that thou, like him, art mocked; for the pestilent creature, as her teeming heads multiplied, grew stronger for mischief, until the great-souled one choked the source of her life.

[Letter VII, § § 2, 3, 6.]

Henry was, however, moving as fast as he could, bent upon his task of peacemaking and reconciliation of quarrels. In this city and that he placed his vicars. His path was far from smooth. While some communities welcomed him or submitted, some resisted, and still more temporized. The opposition was led by Robert of

Naples, who, as has been said, succeeded Charles II in 1309. Most determined in its hostility was Florence, which allied itself with Robert, formed a confederation of anti-imperialist towns, and helpt with men and money every movement against the Emperor. Praiseworthy as the patriotic zeal of the little commercial republic may seem to us in the light of subsequent happenings, it lookt to Dante like impious insubordination to God's anointed. The commonwealth's attempt to maintain such freedom as the municipalities had won, to protect itself and other Italian towns from foreign domination was in his eyes nothing but selfish, stupid obstruction of a heaven-appointed deliverer. A fearful letter was addrest by him "to the wicked Florentines within." Like the epistle to Henry, written at nearly the same time, it was composed in the Casentino, on the upper Arno, where the poet may have been visiting some of the Counts Guidi.

The pitying Providence of the eternal King, who, while perpetuating celestial things by his goodness, doth not despise nor desert our affairs below, hath committed human things, to be governed, to the holy Roman Empire, that the mortal race might be at peace under the serenity of so great a guardianship, and, as nature demandeth, might live everywhere the civil life. And though this be proved by the sacred utterances, and though antiquity, leaning only on the support of reason, beareth witness thereto, yet is it no small confirmation of the truth that when the throne of Augustus is vacant all the world turneth out of its course, the helmsman and rowers in the ship of Peter slumber, and wretched Italy, deserted, and

abandoned to private wills, destitute of all public guidance, is tossed with such battling of winds and waves as words may not express, nay, the wretched Italians themselves can scarce measure with their tears. Wherefore, whosoever in rash presumption do magnify themselves against this most manifest will of God, unless the sword of him who said, 'Vengeance is mine,' have fallen from heaven, must now be smitten with pallor as the judgment of the stern Judge draweth nigh. But you, who transgress law divine and human, whom the dire greed of cupidity hath found ready to be drawn into every crime, doth not the dread of the second death pursue you? Since ye first and alone, rejecting the yoke of liberty, have murmured against the glory of the Roman Prince, the king of the world and the minister of God, and on the plea of prescriptive right have refused the duty of the submission which ye owed and have rather risen up in the insanity of rebellion! Or are ye ignorant in your madness and your spleen that public rights have limitation only with the limitation of time and can be called to no reckoning by prescription? For the sanctions of the laws proclaim aloud, and human reason perceiveth by searching out, that the supremacy over public things howsoever long neglected can never lose its force, nor be occupied by another as having lapsed. For that which maketh for the advantage of all cannot perish, nor even be weakened, without detriment to all.

The poet mocks at the Florentine fortifications, belittles the recent heroic success achieved by Parma, and bids his townsmen remember Frederick.

Oh most wretched offspring of Fiesole! Oh Punic barbarism once again! Do the things that I have touched on strike too

little terror into you? Nay, I believe that, for all the hope you simulate in countenance and lying word, ye tremble in your waking hours and ever start from your slumbers shuddering at the omens that have crept into your dreams or remembering the counsels of the daytime. But if in your well-merited trepidation ye regret your madness, but yet grieve not for it, be it further imprinted on your minds (that the streamlets of fear and woe may flow into the bitterness of repentance) that this baton-bearer of the Roman estate, this divine and triumphant Henry, thirsting not for his own but for the public ease, hath shrunk on our behalf from no arduous task, freely sharing in our sufferings, as though the prophet Isaiah had pointed the finger of prophecy upon him, after Christ, when by the revelation of the spirit of God he foretold "truly he hath borne our weakness and hath carried our woes."

[Letter VI, § § 1, 2, 6.]

The Emperor, meanwhile, was making some headway. Brescia, after a stubborn resistance, had been obliged to surrender. Henry proceeded to Genoa and Pisa, thence slowly to Rome, where were stationed troops belonging to King Robert and to Florence. In spite of much opposition, Henry did contrive to have himself crowned in the church of St. John Lateran on June 29, 1312. It was at this point that "the Gascon deceived mighty Henry"; that is, the Gascon Pope, Clement V, who had encouraged the Emperor to invade Italy, now turned against him. To Dante and his fellow-imperialists it seemed incredible that Clement had ever intended to deal fairly.

The sacred court a man shall then obey
Who, secretly or openly, shall fail
To walk beside great Henry on his way.
[*Paradise*, XXX.]

Tho weak with fever, the Emperor next laid uneventful siege to Florence. No attack was made, and after a month and a half his troops withdrew, laying the country waste on their march. A few months later, the Florentines made Robert suzerain of their city for a period of five years. Just then, however, the Emperor's prospects seemed to brighten. Reinforcements came from Germany and Sicily, and in some quarters opposition appeared to be relaxing. At this moment—on August 24, 1313—Henry died at Buonconvento near Siena, being on his way from Pisa to Naples; and with him the ancient monarchy past away.

With the rivalry of Papacy and Empire two famous party names are always associated. It is in the middle of the twelfth century, before the final struggle began, that we first come upon the titles Guelf and Ghibelline, later used to designate the partisans respectively of the Pope and of the Emperor. According to one party, the Monarch was a vassal of the Papacy; according to the other, he was responsible only to God. But in the course of the long, confused strife, personal ambitions, local interests, private feuds were more conspicuous than general principles. The two terms were originally German, and of purely local significance, Welf being a ducal family name, Weibling the appellation of a Franconian castle.

In northern Italy the words crop up again at the outset of the thirteenth century, when Philip of Swabia and Otto of Brunswick were fighting for the Empire, Welf and Weibling having become in Italian mouths *Guelfo* and *Ghibellino*. The division thus begun in Lombardy spread from town to town, from family to family, parting Italy into two hostile factions.

In general the Guelfs, or Pope's men, stood for Italian independence of German control. It was the papal policy to concentrate the middle and south of the peninsula under the direct government of the Church, and to encourage the development of rich and warlike free cities as a buffer in the north. The Ghibellines, or loyal Imperialists, on the other hand, represented the old feudal authority, law, and tradition. Essentially military and aristocratic, they shared in the vices and the virtues of their monarchs. Their irreligious worldliness and insolent disregard of the rights of their fellow-men were not incompatible with generosity and magnificence. Guelf sentiment was particularly strong in the frugal, well-to-do middle classes, the master workmen and trades-people, strict Christians and public-spirited town-builders. Ghibelline proclivities were naturally cherisht by the descendants of old feudal beneficiaries and by their bands of armed retainers. Between these camps, and even within them, were many who were drawn by circumstances to one side or the other. The body of day laborers especially constituted an uncertain and formidable element in the cities. Thus is happened that

some municipalities were consistently Guelf or Ghibelline, while others—as Florence—changed politics with the predominance of this or that faction.

Like the later division between Blacks and Whites, the strife of Guelfs and Ghibellines in Florence seems to have begun in a family quarrel. In 1215 a noble of the city, Buondelmonte dei Buondelmonti, affianced to a maiden of the great house of Amidei, being persuaded by the instigations of a lady of the Donati family, abandoned his betrothed and wedded the daughter of this mischief-maker. The outraged Amidei held a council, and finally determined to kill the offender. On the morning of Easter Sunday he was thrown from his horse, at the end of the Ponte Vecchio, and his throat was cut. A tumult ensued, and a lasting feud. The friends of the Buondelmonti arrayed themselves with the Guelfs; the Uberti, siding with the Amidei, became leaders of the Ghibellines. These two factions already existed in Florence, as elsewhere, but had not previously come into violent conflict. The contest thus begun lasted for fifty-seven years. In 1248, Frederick II, exasperated at the Pope and desirous of weakening his hold, offered the Uberti his aid in expelling their opponents. A long and bitter fight in the streets of Florence resulted, at barricades, from tower to tower, by day and night. On the arrival of Frederick's bastard son, Frederick of Antioch, with sixteen hundred German horsemen, the Guelfs were overpowered, and left the city. Then for the first time party vengeance wreakt

itself upon the buildings of Florence. Thirty-six Guelf strongholds and towers were razed, and an attempt was made to wreck the Baptistery of St. John, the pride of the city, by throwing down a tower upon it. Later, when the Guelfs gained the upper hand, they retaliated in kind, building city walls with the stones of Ghibelline palaces. They destroyed the houses of the Uberti, and decreed that nothing should ever be erected on that site; the place still remains an open square, the Piazza della Signoria. Meanwhile, on the death of the Emperor, in 1250, there was a temporary reconciliation. There had already been a popular uprising, caused by the excesses of the Ghibelline nobles, and now the people recalled the Guelfs who had been driven out, and obliged them to make peace with their adversaries. The peace did not last long. The next year some influential Ghibelline families opposed a projected expedition against the Ghibelline city of Pistoia; the campaign, however, was successfully carried out, and the victorious Florentines banisht these clans. The government then became predominently Guelf.

In 1258, a conspiracy between Manfred and the Uberti having come to light, the people rose in arms, put to death several of the plotters, and expelled all the leading Ghibelline families. The exiles took refuge in Siena, a Ghibelline stronghold. Thence they applied for aid to Manfred, now king of Sicily. Manfred, busy with other things, took little interest in their cause, but lent them a hundred German horsemen. Bitterly disappointed,

they adopted a shrewd suggestion made by Farinata degli Uberti. They were to ply the Germans with wine and let them, with Manfred's standard, rashly attack a superior force of Florentines. Not long did they have to wait for an opportunity. In May, 1260, Florence equipt a powerful army to make war on Siena, her great rival. After capturing three Sienese castles, they encampt before the city. The drunken Germans sallied forth, and, after the first havoc wrought by the suddenness and vigor of their assault, were all cut to pieces. Manfred's standard was taken, dragged through the camp, and carried to Florence. Soon afterwards the Florentine host returned home. Manfred, on learning of the fate of his standard and his men, felt that his honor was at stake, and granted eight hundred horsemen more. They were to serve three months, their pay to be furnisht jointly by the Sienese and the king. The new troops, which arrived at the end of July, were received with jubilation. Aid was obtained from Pisa and other Ghibelline towns of Tuscany, so that in all the cavalry force consisted of eighteen hundred. The Germans were the best fighters. Now the Sienese and their allies were eager for a big battle. They laid siege to the Florentine fortress of Montalcino, hoping to draw out the enemy. The Florentines, deceived by false reports of disaffection and treachery among their opponents, collected a great army and set forth with much splendor. With their allies from Lucca, Perugia, and Orvieto, they had over three thousand horse and more

than thirty thousand foot. Meanwhile the exiles were conspiring with certain Ghibellines who were left in Florence and compelled to fight under her standard. These were to desert from their companies in every quarter, as soon as the battle opened, thus throwing their host into confusion. The armies met at Montaperti, on the Arbia, fifteen miles from Siena. The Germans, on the eve of battle, demanded double pay, which was granted. Disappointed in their expectation of treason, startled by defection from their own ranks, the Florentines suffered a terrible defeat. More than fifteen hundred were captured and over twenty-five hundred were slain. There was not a family in Florence that had not one killed or a prisoner. The Guelfs immediately fled to Lucca, abandoning the city to the enemy. Florence now became Ghibelline. Count Guido Novello was appointed mayor to govern the city for King Manfred. At a Ghibelline council held in Empoli, Siena and Pisa proposed that Florence be razed to the ground, and had it not been for the stout opposition of Farinata degli Uberti, this plan might have been carried out. Lucca was now the only Tuscan city in possession of the Guelfs, and even she was soon compelled to drive out the Florentine fugitives, who took refuge in Bologna.

Before long, however, the tables were turned again. Charles of Anjou, summoned by the Pope, in 1266 defeated Manfred at Benevento, not far from Naples. The king's army was made up of Germans, Saracens, and Apulians; Charles's troops consisted of French and of

Guelf exiles from Tuscany. Manfred died, fighting madly. At this, the Guelfs began to take heart. The Florentine people were discontented with the rule of Guido Novello; after a brief experiment with a coalition government, the count, scared by a riot, fled from the city, and was then not permitted to return. The city now got a mayor from Orvieto. All exiles were allowed to come back, and there were many intermarriages between the two parties. The Guelfs, however, had gained the supremacy. In 1267, at their request, Charles of Anjou sent them eight hundred French horsemen under Guy of Montfort. The Ghibellines did not await their arrival, but decampt the night before, going to Siena, Pisa, and other places, whence they never returned. The Guelfs put Florence, for ten years, under the suzerainty of Charles; and after that, a local Guelf government was establisht. In all Tuscany, only Pisa and Siena remained Ghibelline.

Such was the society into which Dante was born; such was the history that confronted him; such, in fine, were the events which, immediately preceding or following his birth, determined his conception of human relations. It is no wonder that to his mind the supreme good was peace, peace on earth and good will to men, peace which should allow families, cities, and nations to abide in godly concord, peace which should enable the individual man to develop to the utmost his Heaven-given faculties, his taste for refinement, his striving for wisdom, his love for his fellow-creatures. To transform

selfish, dissentient humanity into a mundane City of God, the one thing needful was, in his judgment, a strong, stable, just, universal government, in which the spiritual and the temporal powers should be exactly balanced.

CHAPTER III

CHURCH AND STATE IN DANTE

ON the relation of Empire to Papacy, and on the general government of the civilized world, Dante composed, as we noted in the first chapter, an argumentative Latin work, which was apparently suggested by the pretensions of Popes Boniface VIII and John XXII and by certain treatises written in the years of Henry's tragic adventure in Italy. The *Monarchia* (or *De Monarchia*, as it is generally called) is not dated, and conjectures about the time of its issue differ greatly. Boccaccio tells us it belongs to Henry's day. On the other hand, its style, its maturity, as well as the general external circumstances and some small bits of internal evidence, point to the end of Dante's life and his connection with Can Grande della Scala. Tho not printed until 1559, it was well known soon after the author's death. Three fourteenth-century manuscripts of it are extant. Its solution of the great problem of social organization is in keeping with the spirit of the age that was ending. Submission to authority, repression of individual initiative in thought and conduct—these were fundamental principles in medieval

times. Wisdom and power were bestowed by Heaven upon its earthly representatives: to their guidance mankind should entrust itself—in things spiritual, to Christ's successor; in things temporal, to the Lord's anointed; in things intellectual, to the great masters of antiquity. So thought Dante and his contemporaries. For the last hundred years and more, our race has gone to the opposite extreme, denying divine inspiration, overlooking even the natural and manifest differences between the mental powers of one man and another, and assuming that a whole people is more competent to judge and to act than any one of its members. Since the French Revolution, the presumption, among us, has been against tradition, in favor of innovation. The idea of discipline has given way to that of self-development, self-realization, self-assertion. That is why, in our democratic day and country, Dante's *Monarchy* seems so strangely antiquated and unreal.

The work is in three books. In the first, Dante begins with a philosophic demonstration that the proper end of mankind is to acquire wisdom, and this acquisition is impossible without peace. Therefore we must infer that God has provided a power competent to maintain tranquillity. In every organization of persons or things ordained for one and the same purpose, a single individual must be the leader, and all the rest must obey; so it must be in human politics—the divinely establisht power that is to keep the world at peace must be a single absolute ruler. Furthermore, equity cannot ex-

ist without a supreme arbiter who, possessing all, shall be incapable of greed, and, endowed with perfect authority, shall never prove insufficient. Under such a monarch kings and subjects can live in justice and in freedom, each country holding to its own peculiar laws, but all obedient to the common essential law, all concordant, all bent on imitating the virtues of their Emperor. Such a condition actually existed (the author tells us) when Christ was born.

Having thus proved, in the first book, the necessity of a Monarchy, Dante proceeds, in the second, to show that the Roman Empire fulfils the requirements. After a violent assault on the slanderers of the divine institution, he adduces various proofs of the mission of Rome to preside over a world-realm: the nobility of Æneas, her founder; the miraculous events of Roman history, to be explained only by heavenly intervention in behalf of the chosen city; the political virtues of the Roman people and of her individual citizens; Rome's natural talent for government; God's judgment repeatedly revealed in trial by battle, as in the case of Æneas and Turnus, the Horatii and Curiatii, Scipio and Hannibal. Moreover, Christ himself sanctioned Roman law by coming into the world under its jurisdiction and by submitting to it when he suffered the death penalty. There follows a stinging rebuke of the greedy ecclesiastics, who never think of these things, their minds being all taken up with worldly goods. And for these goods they are indebted to the very Empire which they oppose, since

temporal possessions came to the Church through the Donation of Constantine.

This donation of the Western Empire to the Papacy is shown, in the third book, to be invalid, because Constantine had no right to give away imperial property, nor had the Church a right to receive it, having been expressly forbidden by Christ to own gold or silver. Concerning the first of these two contentions it may be said, in passing, that while Dante is certainly right on abstract grounds, the Emperors had in fact freely alienated imperial principalities until the time of Frederick II, altho the distinction between the public territory and the individual domain of the Monarch had been establisht by the eleventh century. Regarding the second, it might have been urged that the Church holds property, not as a private possession, but in trust for God. This third book is the most closely reasoned and most important of the three, its object being to prove that the Emperor does not derive his authority from the Pope. Sundry Scriptural arguments of Dante's opponents are first refuted, then the historical proofs based on Constantine and Charlemagne. But Boniface VIII, in his bull *Unam Sanctam*, had defended the supremacy of the Pope on the ground of the need of unity of direction, the very principle that Dante upholds. The author, therefore, next proceeds to show (and this is the really substantial part of his treatise) that man, consisting of body and soul, is made for two ends, for two different kinds of happiness, one temporal, one eternal. Philos-

ophy is the road to one, revelation to the other. Two leaders, then, are needed, one to conduct our earthly course in accordance with ever altering conditions, the other to guide our spirits on the unchanging heavenward path. Both are ordained by God and answerable to him alone. Neither is subject to the other, altho the Emperor should maintain toward the Pope an attitude of filial respect. As Barbarossa said, the Empire is held from God alone, through the election of princes.

Such, in brief, is Dante's carefully argued, but, as it seems to us, wholly impracticable plan for the government of man. Some phases of the same subject are treated also, at considerable length, in the fourth book of his *Banquet;* and he returns to it again and again in the *Commedia*. The discussion in the *Convivio* begins thus:

The root foundation of the Imperial Majesty is in truth the necessity of human civility; which is ordained for a certain end, to wit, the life of felicity; to the which no man is sufficient to attain by himself without the aid of any, inasmuch as man hath need of many things the which no one is able to provide alone. Wherefore the Philosopher saith that man is by nature a social animal. And like as an individual man requireth the companionship of home and household for his completeness, so likewise a house requireth a neighbourhood for its completeness, since otherwise it would suffer many defects which would be a hindrance to felicity. And since a neighbourhood cannot satisfy itself in everything, needs must there be a city for its satisfaction. And further the city requireth for

its arts and for its defence to have mutual relations and brotherhood with the neighbouring cities; wherefore the kingdom was instituted. And inasmuch as the human mind doth not rest in the limited possession of land, but ever, as we see by experience, desireth to acquire more territory, needs must discords and wars arise betwixt kingdom and kingdom. The which things are the tribulations of cities, and through the cities of neighbourhoods, and through the neighbourhoods of houses, and through the houses of man; and thus is felicity impeded. Wherefore to take away these wars and their causes needs must all the earth and whatsoever is given to the generations of men for a possession be a Monarchy, that is one single Princedom having one Prince; who, possessing all things and not being able to desire more, shall hold the kings contented within the boundaries of their kingdoms; so that there shall be peace between them, in which peace the cities may have rest, and in this rest the neighbourhoods may love one another, and in this love the houses may receive whatsoever they need, and, having received this, man may live in felicity, which is that whereto man was born.

[*Banquet*, IV, iv: Wicksteed.]

The divine right of Rome to this office is shown by the supernatural circumstances attending her origin and early history.

Then if we consider her more advanced youth when she was emancipated from the guardianship of royalty by Brutus the first consul, even until Cæsar the first supreme Prince, we shall find that she was exalted not by human but by divine citizens, into whom was inspired not human but divine love, in loving her. And this could not nor might not be save for

some special end, purposed by God in so great an infusion of heaven.

[*Banquet*, IV, v.]

Further proof is afforded by the more than human devotion of Roman citizens, various instances of which the author records.

And it must be manifest that these most excellent ones were instruments wherewith the Divine Providence proceedeth in the Roman Empire, wherein many a time the arm of God was seen to be present. And did not God set his own hand to the battle in which the Albanians fought with the Romans at the beginning, for the headship of rule, when one only Roman held in his hands the freedom of Rome? Did not God interpose with his own hands when the Franks had taken all Rome and were seizing the capitol by stealth at night, and only the voice of a goose gave notice of it? Did not God interpose with his own hand when in the war of Hannibal so many citizens had perished that three bushels of rings were carried off to Africa, and the Romans were ready to abandon their land had not that blessed Scipio the younger undertaken his expedition into Africa for the deliverance of Rome? And did not God interpose with his own hand when a recent citizen of small estate, Tully to wit, defended the liberty of Rome against so great a citizen as was Catiline? Yea, verily. Wherefore we need demand no more in order to see that a special birth and special progress, thought out and ordained by God, was that of the holy city. And verily I am of firm opinion that the stones that are fixed in her walls are worthy of reverence, and the soil where she sits more worthy than man can preach or prove.

[*Banquet*, IV, v.]

In Dante's judgment, the happiness and goodness of mankind depend on the just balance of power between Pope and Emperor; and the destruction of this balance by the greedy ambition of the clergy is responsible for the deplorable state of morals in his own day. The Pope, who has usurpt the Emperor's place, is competent in matters of doctrine, but has no aptitude at showing men how to shape their daily practical lives. This is one of the poet's most cherisht ideas and one of the themes upon which he dwelt most passionately and most persistently. As Mark the Lombard explains to him in Purgatory:

> Your world's depravity is wholly due,
> As thou hast seen, to faulty oversight,
> And not to nature putrified in you.
> Old Rome, which used to steer the world aright,
> Two Suns possest: the one revealed the Lord,
> On mundane pathways shone the other's light.
> The one has quencht the other; and the sword
> Has joined the crozier. To be mated thus
> By sheer compulsion neither can afford.
>
> [*Purgatory*, XVI.]

Of the rapacity and luxury of prelates Dante has many bitter things to say; and he is bitterest when he contrasts modern pomp with the simplicity of the first apostles.

> The Chosen Vessel of the Holy Ghost
> And blessed Cephas came unshod and plain,
> Receiving bread from whatsoever host.
> But modern shepherds need supporters twain

To prop them up, another one to lead
(So great are they!), and one to hold their train.
Their flowing mantles cover up their steed;
Two beasts go marching thus beneath one hide.
Patience divine! patient art thou indeed!

[*Paradise*, XXI.]

In a violent letter to the Italian Cardinals, the indignant Florentine pictures Jews, Saracens, and heathen laughing at Christianity and exclaiming: "Where is their God?"

During Dante's lifetime the two strongest opponents of his political ideal were Popes Boniface VIII and John XXII. The former was the object of the poet's most vehement execration. He is termed "Prince of the modern Pharisees," "the degenerate who sits on the throne." St. Peter in Paradise glows with a ruddy light when he speaks of Boniface.

That man who down on earth usurps my place—
My place, my place, my place, rightfully void
Before its God-begotten Founder's face—
Hath made my burial-town a sewer cloyed
With blood and filth, whereat the evil one
Who fell from here, in Hell is overjoyed.

[*Paradise*, XXVII.]

Guido da Montefeltro, in the lower world, tells how he was beguiled by the crafty prelate, with promise of absolution, to commit one last sin, for which he was damned. For Boniface himself a place is waiting in Hell, among the simonists.

This Pope began his rule under strange circumstances. On the death of Nicholas IV, the cardinals remained in conclave nearly two years, unable to choose a successor. At last they called to the throne, in 1294, a pious hermit, almost eighty years old, a simple, unlettered man of humble birth, who became Pope under the name of Celestine V. Forthwith he began to long for his cell in the Abruzzi, and lent a ready ear to the scheming cardinal who coveted his office. Persuaded by Boniface (so it is said), he abdicated before the year was over. Dante puts him in the outer Hell among the time-servers and poltroons—"him who for cowardice made the great refusal." Then Boniface, through the influence of Charles II, whom he had promist to aid in his attempt to regain Sicily, secured his own appointment. To make himself doubly safe, he kept Celestine in prison until the latter's death. Some considered his election invalid. Cunning, unscrupulous, fond of wealth and display, scandalously partial to his relatives and retainers, haughty, cruel, he was also a man of indomitable courage and energy. In 1298 he refused to crown the victorious Albert of Hapsburg, and himself assumed crown and sword, declaring himself Cæsar. He it was who induced the Florentines, in 1301, to admit Charles of Valois as a peace-maker, and thus got control of the Tuscan city. This Charles was a brother of Philip IV of France, and his ostensible mission was to put an end to the ugly quarrel between the Black and White parties in the little republic. But he was no sooner

within the city with his troops, than he turned the power over to the pro-papal Blacks, who proceeded to exile their opponents, among them Dante. The poet had, then, both personal and patriotic reasons for detesting Boniface. Nevertheless, in the final tragedy that overtook his adversary, his sympathy was with the holder of the holy office. That tragedy was the outrage of Anagni. The papal dealings with the house of France, which had begun with the summoning of Charles of Anjou, brought full measure of humiliation to the Papacy. With King Philip the Fair, Boniface carried on a long and bitter struggle. Finally, the king attempted to have his enemy deposed for profligacy and heresy; and the Pope retaliated by excommunicating Philip and releasing his subjects from their allegiance. This bull was to be placarded on the cathedral of Anagni, Boniface's birthplace and home. But on the day before—September 7, 1303—an armed force sent by Philip unexpectedly invaded the town and the palace. The leaders were William of Nogaret, one of the king's men, and Sciarra Colonna, whose family Boniface had robbed of their possessions. The townspeople joined in the attack. In this desperate plight, the Pope behaved with spirit and dignity. Arrayed in crown and mantle, cross and keys in hand, he mounted the throne and defied his assailants. For three days he was held a prisoner, and his house was sackt. Then the populace turned about, and drove Nogaret, Colonna, and their followers out of town. Boniface hastened to Rome, intent on vengeance. But

the shock had been too terrible for a man so old and so proud. He went mad and died. Dante likens the wrong done to the Pope by the lilies of France to the suffering inflicted on our Saviour. Boniface himself, in the moment of peril, had made the same comparison.

That past and future crime may seem as naught,
I see Anagni filled with *fleurs-de-lis*,
And Christ, embodied in his vicar, caught,
A second time exposed to mockery;
I see the vinegar and gall renewed;
'Twixt living thieves our butchered Lord I see.
[*Purgatory*, XX.]

The unfortunate Celestine, who yielded his place to Boniface VIII, was sainted by the Church. But by Dante, who held him responsible for the destruction of his party, he is put, as has been said, among the spiritless wretches in the outer Hell. Their punishment is described thus:

And I, upon whose brain strange wildness came,
Said, "Master, what is this that now I hear,
And who that race whom torment so doth tame?"
And he to me: "This wretched doom they bear,
The sorrow-smitten souls of those whose name
Nor foul reproach nor glorious praise did share.
Mingled are they with those of evil fame,
The angels who nor rebels were, nor true
To God, but dwelt in isolated shame.
Heaven, fearing loss of beauty, spurned that crew;

Nor were they harboured in the depths of Hell,
Lest to the damned some glory might accrue."
And I: "O Master, what doom terrible
Makes them lament with such a bitter cry?"
And he: "Full briefly I the cause will tell.
No hope have these that they shall ever die,
And this blind life of theirs so base is shown,
All other doom they view with envious eye.
Their fame the world above leaves all unknown;
Mercy and Justice look on them with scorn.
Talk not of them; one glance, and then pass on."
And as I looked I saw a standard borne,
Which whirling moved with such a rapid flight,
It seemed to me all thought of rest to spurn;
And in its rear a long train came to sight,
Of people, so that scarce I held it true
Death had undone such legions infinite.
And when among the crowd some forms I knew,
I looked, and lo! I saw his spectre there
Who basely from his calling high withdrew.
Forthwith I understood and saw full clear,
These were the souls of all that caitiff host
Who neither God nor yet His foes could bear.
These wretched slaves, who ne'er true life could boast,
Were naked all, and, in full evil case,
By gnats and wasps were stung, that filled that coast;
And streams of blood down-trickled on each face,
And, mingled with their tears, beneath their feet,
Were licked by worms that wriggled foul and base.
[*Hell*, III: Plumptre.]

These are the souls of poor creatures whose names deserve to perish. And it is noteworthy that in the verses

just cited none are called by name. Only one, indeed, is vested with any individuality, and even he is so vaguely presented that some scholars have hesitated to recognize him as Celestine. There is no such obscurity in the passage that describes the penalty awaiting Boniface. This prelate's name is plainly shouted by the tortured soul of Pope Nicholas III, who, being upside down in a little round hole, cannot see the traveler who addresses him, and takes him for Boniface, arriving three years before his destined time. The other personages are so described as to leave no doubt concerning their identity. Nicholas himself, notorious for nepotism and simony, was an Orsini, a "son of the she-bear," or *orsa*. The Pope who is to follow Boniface to this spot—the "new Jason" favored by the King of France as the Biblical Jason in Maccabees was favored by King Antiochus —is Clement V, the Gascon who deceived Emperor Henry VII, and who plunged the Church into the Babylonian Captivity by moving the papal see to Avignon. His contemporaries lookt on him as the conscienceless tool of Philip the Fair, who had procured his election. All these Popes were simonists. Simony, the sin of trafficking in sacred offices, is named for the magician Simon, of Acts viii, who tried to purchase the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Such sinners, when they reach Hell, are planted head downward in a hole, and a flame plays upon the soles of their projecting feet. Burial in this inverted posture was a not uncommon punishment for murder.

I saw within the sides and bottom there
The livid rock all pierced with many a hole,
All of one size, and each did round appear.

. . . . . .

Out of the mouth of each I saw appear
A sinner's feet, and upward to the thigh
The legs; all else was in that prison drear.
With all of them the feet in agony
And joints were writhing in the fierce fire's throe;
They would have burst all bands and withes that tie.
E'en as of things well oiled the fiery glow
Is wont to spread o'er all the surface wide,
So was it with these men from heel to toe.
"Who is that, Master, by such torment tried,
Who writhes himself above all others there,
O'er whom," said I, "a redder flame doth glide?"
And he to me: "If thou wilt let me bear
Thee down along the bank that lies most low,
Thou from himself of his own sin shalt hear."

. . . . . .

Then came we to the fourth embankment's height;
We turned, and on the left hand wound our way
Down to the narrow pit, with holes bedight;
Nor did my Master put my weight away
From off his hip till by the hole we stood
Of him whose legs went writhing so alway.
"Whoe'er thou be whose head is downward bowed,
O doleful soul, like stake in earth deep driven,
Speak if thou canst"; so spake I out aloud.
As stands the friar-confessor, who hath shriven
The base assassin, who, when fixed aright,
Recalls him, that some respite may be given,

I stood: he cried: "And stand'st thou there upright,
Stand'st thou already here, O Boniface?
By many years my scroll hath erred from right.
Has that ill gain so soon lost all its grace,
For which thou didst not fear by fraud to seize
The beauteous bride and work her foul disgrace?"
So stood I then, as men stand ill at ease,
Failing to see what meant the answers made,
And mocked, not knowing how to answer these.
Then, "Tell him quickly, quickly," Virgil said,
"'I am not he, not he whom thou dost guess'."
And I, as he commanded me, obeyed.
Then writhed his feet that soul, in sore distress,
And sighing, with sad voice of deepest woe
Said to me, "What then bidd'st thou me confess?
If thou'rt so eager who I am to know,
That thou hast therefore from the bank come down,
Know that round me the sacred robe did flow.
I as the she-bear's son was truly known,
So eager to increase the bear-cub's store;
There money, here myself, in purse I've thrown.
Beneath my head are dragged a many more,
My predecessors, stained with Simon's sin,
Now crushed where fissures through the hard rock bore.
I too shall downward fall when he shall win
His way here, who I thought had come in thee,
When I my sudden questions did begin.
But longer time my feet thus blistered be,
Longer have I been here, feet over head,
Than he shall stand with red-hot feet to see.

For after him comes one of fouler deed
From Western clime, a pastor without law,
Who him and me alike shall supersede.
Another Jason he, such as we saw
In Maccabees; and as on him his king
Then smiled, so shall the Prince who France doth awe
Treat this one." I scarce knew if 'twere a thing
Too bold, but I to him in verse replied:
"Tell me, I pray thee, what great sum to bring
Our Lord bade Peter ere He would confide
The sacred keys into his custody?
Truly no more than 'Follow me,' He cried;
Nor those with Peter bade Matthias buy
With gold or silver, when by lot he gained
The place the false soul lost by treachery.
Therefore stay here; thou righteously art pained;
And keep thou well thy money basely earned,
Which thee to boldness against Charles constrained.
And were it not I have not quite unlearned
My awe and reverence for those keys supreme,
Which by thy hands in yon glad life were turned,
I would use words that harsher far would seem,
Because your avarice fills the world with woe,
Crushing the good, and those of vile esteem
Upraising. . . .

. . . . . .

Silver and gold are now made gods by you;
And what divides you from the Paynim wild?
Ye worship hundreds, he to one is true."

. . . . . .

And while my song such notes as these did pour,
As anger or remorse his soul did sting,
Both feet he writhed as though in torment sore.
I think my Guide was pleased as I did sing,
With such contented lip he still did list
The sound of words that had a truthful ring.
[*Hell*, XIX: Plumptre.]

Clement V, the "pastor without law," became Pope through the influence of Philip the Fair, who had previously made him swear upon the Host to comply with six conditions, the last of which was not then revealed to him. This sixth condition was probably his consent to the spoliation and suppression of the Order of the Templars, which the king carried out with great profit to himself. Clement did, however, underhandedly oppose, in 1308, the elevation of Philip's brother, Charles of Valois, to the imperial throne, and favored the election of Henry VII. Later, as we have seen, he turned against the Emperor, yielding to pressure from Philip. Clement, a Frenchman, apparently never entered Italy. His transference of the papal court to France was in Dante's eyes a betrayal of Rome, Italy, and the Church. In the following passage it is set forth in allegorical style. The chariot of the Church has been transformed by corrupting wealth into a hideous monster, upon which sits shamelessly a harlot, the degenerate Papacy. A giant, representing the house of France, drags both beast and woman off into the forest.

Bold as a castle in an upland place,
A lawless harlot I beheld on this
Strange vehicle, with keen and restless face.
And lest that wanton he perchance should miss,
I saw a giant close beside her rise.
From time to time the two exchanged a kiss.
But when she turned her greedy, roving eyes
On me, that savage leman with a whip
From head to foot his mistress did chastise.
Then, jealous, angry, cruel, he did rip
The beast away, and thro' the wood did pull
So far that from my sight he made to slip
The harlot and the monster wonderful.

[*Purgatory*, XXXII.]

Clement's damnation is foretold once more in the *Paradiso:*

Not long shall he be suffered by the Lord
To hold the keys; for headlong he shall go
Where Simon Magus reaps his just reward.
Anagni's prelate he shall push below.

[*Paradise*, XXX.]

Equally damnable are those members of the royal family of France who, during the poet's time, in alliance with the Papacy played such an important part in Italian affairs. Most odious of all monarchs is Philip IV, surnamed "the Fair," who was born in 1268, three years after Dante, and became king in 1285. Villani says of him: "He was one of the handsomest men in the world, and one of the tallest in stature, with every limb in good

proportion. Personally he was wise and good, for a layman; but, following his own pleasures, especially the hunt, he did not apply his powers to the government of his kingdom, but entrusted them to others, so that for the most part he was ruled by evil counsel, and believed in it too much, whereby many perils came upon his realm." Of his quarrel with Boniface we have had occasion to speak. It arose from Philip's attempt to tax the French clergy. Boniface, in his bull *Clericis Laicos*, relieved Church property of all obligations to the State, and declared the Pope sole trustee of ecclesiastical possessions. The king thereupon prohibited the exportation of valuables from France, and thus cut off the supply of contributions to Rome from that country. The tragic outcome of the dispute has already been told. After the brief term of Benedict XI, who succeeded Boniface, came the pliant Clement V. Rome was forsaken for Avignon. The Templars were cruelly and illegally persecuted, and their great treasure seized. The place of their confinement is still shown in the fortifications of the old town of Aigues-Mortes, founded by the saintly crusader, Louis IX. Their Grand Master was burned in 1313. The next year, both Philip and Clement died. The king perisht by a curious accident, which Villani thus recounts: "In the year 1314, in the month of November, King Philip, king of France, who had reigned twenty-nine years, died by mischance; for, being on a hunt, a wild boar ran between the legs of the horse on which he was, and made him fall from it,

and he presently died." Dante frequently refers to Philip, but in the *Divine Comedy* never mentions his name.

Not less hateful, and more contemptible, was Philip's brother Charles, Count of Valois and Alençon, surnamed "Lackland." He aspired to four crowns—one of them imperial—and got none. After his death he was described as "king's son, king's brother, uncle of three kings, father of a king, and never king." In 1290, at the age of twenty, he married the eldest daughter of Charles II of Naples, and thus won the title of Count of Anjou. Ten years later, he was summoned to Italy by Boniface VIII to assist Charles II in his war against Frederick of Aragon in Sicily, and also to serve as "peacemaker" in Florence. In return for these services he was to be made Emperor. It was of course his betrayal of Florence, in 1301, that most kindled Dante's ire. He won the city by treachery, "the lance with which Judas tilted." After fair promises, he allowed Corso Donati, the exiled leader of the Blacks, to return to the city, to throw open the prisons, and with a mob of satellites and criminals to pillage the houses of the Whites. His ensuing Sicilian expedition was a complete failure, and he went back to France ignominiously in 1302. In 1325 he died. His son became first of the Valois kings as Philip VI.

The misdeeds of the house, as we have already noted, are told to Dante, on the island of Purgatory, by the ancestor of the race, Hugh Capet.

The root was I of that pernicious tree
Which darkens so the Christian continent
That wholesome fruits thereon are few to see.
But if Douai and Bruges, Lille and Ghent
Had strength to strike, revenge would not delay.
Soon may it fall, O Judge omnipotent!
Hugh Capet I was called across the way;
Those Lewises and Philips are my sons
Whom luckless France doth latterly obey.

[*Purgatory*, XX.]

There follows a rapid enumeration of crimes committed since "the great Provençal dowry" made the house shameless: annexation of territory in France, the Italian conquest by Charles of Anjou, the sacrifice of Conradin, the murder of St. Thomas, then the duplicity of Charles of Valois.

I see a time, ere many years have flown,
When still another Charles proceeds from France
To make himself and kindred better known.
Unarmed, alone he fares, bearing the lance
That Judas tilted with; so sure his aim
That Florence feels him prick and burst her panse.
Not land shall be his meed, but sin and shame
Which, lightly tho he reckon such mishap,
Shall ever rest the heavier on his name.

[*Purgatory*, XX.]

After a shocking instance of the avarice of Charles II of Naples, who sold his own daughter, comes the turn of the arch-criminal, Philip the Fair. Not content with

playing the part of Pontius Pilate at Anagni, he plunders the Order of the Temple.

> So ruthless I the modern Pilate see,
> All this contents him not; without arrest,
> He swoops upon the Temple hungrily.
> O God, my God, O! when shall I be blest
> The vengeance to behold, which, hid away,
> Sweetens the wrath within thy secret breast?
>
> [*Purgatory*, xx.]

A tool of France like Clement V, a simonist like Boniface VIII, and hateful to Dante as an adversary of the Empire, was John XXII, also a Frenchman, Pope from 1316 to 1334. He opposed Louis the Bavarian, who had been chosen Emperor, and offered the imperial title to Charles the Fair of France. Louis, for his part, set up Nicholas V as antipope in Rome, but was unable to maintain him after quitting Italy. John created a scandal by coining in Avignon a gold piece similar to the Florentine florin, and bearing the image of John the Baptist. Dante taunts him with such devotion to this saint as to forget Peter and Paul. His greatest achievement was the collection of a huge fortune by traffic in sacred offices. The disposal of benefices throughout Christendom he took into his own hands, and managed the business with a skill that might well excite the admiration of our most opulent municipal dignitaries. Villani relates that at his death he left over eighteen million florins in gold coin, and jewels and gold

vessels, crosses, crowns, and miters worth seven millions more. Of interdicts and excommunications he made profitable use, withdrawing his decrees—so it was said—for a consideration.

With swords in days of old were battles won;
But now 'tis done forbidding men to taste
The bread our kindly Father keeps from none.
Think, thou that writest things to be effaced,
Peter and Paul are living, they who spent
Their lives upon the vineyard thou dost waste!
Well canst thou say: "My heart is so intent
On him who sought the desert all alone
And for Salome's dance to death was sent,
That Paul and Peter are to me unknown."

[*Paradise*, XVIII.]

Among those on whom John's ready anathema fell was a man very dear to our poet. The young champion of Empire Can Grande della Scala, lord of Verona, was excommunicated in 1317, and remained under the ban until his death in 1329. When Dante, shortly after his banishment, took refuge at the court of the Scaligeri in Verona, he saw Can Grande, then a boy, and conceived great hopes of him. The "great Lombard" who at that time ruled the city was a brother of the lad, either Bartolommeo, the oldest, or Alboino, who came next. By him the exile was hospitably received. Later in life he visited the court again. In 1311, on the death of Alboino, Can Grande, who had been associated with his brother in the government, became sole master. He had recently

been present in Milan when Emperor Henry VII put on the iron crown; and from that time his career was a splendid series of victories. Vicar Imperial in Verona and Vicenza, he became lord of the latter city, and in 1318 was chosen Captain General of the Ghibelline League in Lombardy. He was afterwards made ruler of Padua, and finally took Treviso, where he died. A curious equestrian statue of him is to be seen over his sarcophagus among the tombs of the Scaligeri in Verona. The Veronese Chronicle tells us that "he was of tall and handsome figure, comely and gracious in all his acts and likewise in speech, warlike in arms." Villani describes him as "a powerful ruler and a good lord." Boccaccio says: "Master Cane della Scala, whom fortune favored in many things, was one of the most notable and magnificent lords known in Italy since Frederick II." A letter almost certainly by Dante declares that the writer was led to Verona by the great and almost incredible fame of its lord. "And there I beheld your mighty deeds, I saw and received your kindnesses; and whereas I had previously suspected that report transcended the truth, I then learned that the truth transcended report." To him, it would seem, the poet dedicated his *Paradiso*, the first canto of which was apparently sent to Can Grande with this letter. The epistle, which is written in Latin, begins thus: "To the magnificent and victorious lord, Lord Can Grande della Scala, Vicar General of the Holy Roman Empire in the city of Verona and the state of Vicenza, his devoted Dante Alighieri, a Florentine by

birth but not in character, wishes a life eternally happy, with endless increase of his glorious name." After generous praise and assurance of friendship, the author presents the poem to his patron. Next comes an interesting discussion of allegory, and finally an exposition of the opening lines of the canto.

We have seen with what feverish enthusiasm Dante had welcomed the coming of Emperor Henry VII; and we can imagine how keen was his disappointment at his hero's untimely death. Still he did not lose faith. All his life long, he cherisht the expectation that Heaven would send a great secular redeemer. With his exalted opinion of Can Grande, he probably harbored some hope that the valiant Vicar Imperial might prove to be that man of destiny. Listen to the words of Cacciaguida, the poet's great-great-grandfather, who, in the heaven of Mars, foretells the exile of his descendant:

"Thy first asylum and thy first repair
In that great Lombard's bounty shalt thou find
Whose arms above the steps an eagle bear.
For thee his courtesy shall be so kind
That, 'twixt you two, of granting and request
That shall be first which elsewhere lags behind.
There shalt thou see a lad, at birth imprest
By Mars, our mighty star, so mightily,
His deeds shall be renowned from East to West.
Mankind as yet his greatness does not see:
Nine years, no more, the heavenly circles' coil
Has turned about his head, so young is he.

But ere the Gascon guile great Harry foil,
Sparks of his goodness shall be seen by some
In heedlessness of money and of toil.
His full magnificence to light shall come
In proper time; his fame shall be so great
That e'en his foemen's tongues cannot be dumb.
Wait thou for him, his benefits await!
By him shall many men transmuted be,
And rich and beggars shall exchange their state.
Of him, take record in thy memory,
But tell it not—" and then he told me things
Incredible to men whose eyes shall see.

[*Paradise*, XVII.]

What these things are, the narrator prudently leaves unspecified, as they still lay in the future when he wrote. Elsewhere, however, without mentioning names, he boldly prophesies the advent of a great judge and saviour who shall occupy the vacant imperial throne. Whatever may have been his uncertainty with regard to the man predestined, his faith in the coming of some deliverer was absolute. That firm belief was his comfort at a time when the world seemed to him to be going from bad to worse. In the very first canto of the *Inferno* a solemn prediction is uttered by Virgil, the type of Reason. This ancient sage has come to the rescue of the author, who, attempting to climb the mountain of righteousness, finds his path obstructed by a wolf, the symbol of uncheckt desire. Satan it was who, in his envy of mankind, first sent this beast into the world.

Its days, however, are numbered. A Hound, indifferent to lands and money, hungry for love, wisdom, and virtue alone, shall come to save "low-lying Italy," as the Latin poet once called his country, that land for which, the *Æneid* tells us, Camilla, Euryalus, Turnus, and Nisus perisht. The Hound shall be born "between Feltro and Feltro"—a mysterious phrase, which enhances the obscurity of the oracle and perhaps contains a hidden reference to the quarter whence the expected saviour is to come. It may be noted that the name Can Grande means "Great Dog."

"A different, distant course thy steps must trace,"
He answered, when he saw my tearful eyes,
"If thou alive wouldst leave this savage place.
That evil beast, the cause of all thy cries,
Allows no man its path to travel o'er,
But blocks his passage till the victim dies.
Wicked its heart, and cruel to the core!
Its ravening hunger it can never sate,
And after meat is hungrier than before.
Full many a creature now becomes its mate,
And more shall mate with it, until the Hound
Shall come and drive it to its woful fate.
For he shall feed on neither gold nor ground,
But wisdom, love, and virtue shall he crave.
His birthplace 'twixt two Feltros shall be found.
And he low-lying Italy shall save,
Which brought the maid Camilla, Turnus, too,
Euryalus and Nisus to the grave.

The wolf thro' every town shall he pursue,
And, ere he stop, shall hunt it back to Hell,
Whence envy first did turn it loose on you."

[*Hell*, I.]

The greedy wolf returns to Dante's mind in Purgatory, and once more he voices his hope of a deliverer.

A curse upon thee, ancient wolf, that still
Beyond all other beasts dost covet prey,
For nothing can thy hollow hunger fill!
O sky, by whose gyrations men do say
That fortunes here below are turned about,
When shall He come to drive the beast away?

[*Purgatory*, XX.]

In the last canto of the *Purgatorio* we find a third prophecy, which is at once the most explicit and the most obscure: explicit in its plain indication that the redeemer is to be an Emperor, who shall punish both the Papacy and the house of France; obscure in its enigmatic, oracular phraseology. One of its problems, indeed, has not yet been solved to the complete satisfaction of commentators. Why does the poet call his redeemer a "five hundred, ten, and five," or 515? The most obvious explanation is that this figure is in Roman numerals DXV, and that these letters, transposed, form the word DVX, or "leader." Such devices were not unfamiliar in Dante's time, and a strange significance was attacht to numbers and letters. Probably enough, the poet wisht to suggest more than we can see. At any rate, he strove to create an atmosphere of mys-

tery, and succeeded well. To enhance the mysteriousness, he compares his prediction to the utterance of the goddess Themis, famous for her obscure oracle, and to the riddle of the bloodthirsty Theban Sphinx, finally unraveled by Œdipus. It must be remembered that Themis, to avenge the death of the Sphinx, sent the Thebans a beast to lay waste their flocks and fields. The followers of the new Œdipus, however, shall have nothing to fear from Themis, the goddess of Justice. This second Œdipus is to be the great Emperor, the deliverer. Dark tho Dante's words may be, the events shall ere long solve the riddle—they shall be the Naiads who shall explain the difficult enigma. Why the poet regarded Naiads as types of successful guessers is a question that need not be discust here. At the beginning of the passage we have a reference to an allegorical scene just witnest by Dante, a portrayal of the Donation of Constantine, its ruinous effect on the Church, and the removal of the papal see to Avignon by the house of France. The imperial eagle leaves its feathers in the chariot of the Church, which then turns into a horrid monster, and is dragged off by a giant, as we have already seen. The thief who sins with the French giant is the corrupt Papacy, which has usurpt the place of the rightful authority.

> Heirless the eagle shall not be alway,
> The bird that left its feathers in the car,
> Which then became a monster, then a prey.
> For I see clear (and therefore tell) a star

Now drawing near, a moment to contrive
In which—secure from every let and bar—
A man yclept Five Hundred Ten and Five,
A messenger of God, shall slay the thief,
The giant, too, that doth with her connive.
Perhaps my testimony, dark and brief
As Sphinx or Themis, doth thy reason shock,
Because, like them, it mystifies belief.
But soon the facts the riddle shall unlock—
The problem-solving Naiads they shall be—
Without avenging loss of field or flock.

[*Purgatory*, XXXIII.]

CHAPTER IV

MEDIEVAL SONG

TO turn from politics to song is to step from shadow into sunshine. The bright side of medieval life, which finds its best expression in lyric verse, now calls for notice. We have already cast a passing look at the development of delicate manners, polisht society, games, music, poetry: let us pause for a more satisfying survey. Perhaps the most significant feature of eleventh and twelfth century civilization is the rise of woman in the social scale, an evolution which culminates, on the secular side, in the courtly devotion of gentleman to lady, and, on the religious side, in the cult of the Blessed Virgin. Just how, when, and where it started, no one knows. The position of many dames as heiresses and proprietors of great estates may have had some influence at the beginning. A determining factor, no doubt, was the greater leisure and superior taste of womankind for the elegances of life, which both sexes, in times of plenty and tranquillity, were eager to cultivate. Something very analogous is to be seen in America to-day. Another parallel may be found in seventeenth-century France. It must be re-

membered, however, that the conventional, theoretical exaltation of woman had in the Middle Ages little effect on her material status. Wives were chattels; and so were daughters, who were given in marriage, frequently in early childhood, not for their own happiness but for the advantage of their fathers. It was natural enough, then, that nearly all poetic love-making should be of an unlawful kind, that the object of a lover's vows —whether genuine or merely literary—should always be the wife of another. Romantic passion, it was held, could exist under no other circumstances. This tradition (never much more than a bookish fashion) has remained in Gallic literature almost until the present day, and, tiresome of late as it was of old fresh and interesting, has weighed like an unwelcome but persistent incubus on the French drama and novel.

It was in France, and primarily in the rich, pleasure-loving south, that social graces first unfolded. Dances, heretofore a rustic diversion, came to be fostered by the elect; and out of them grew the dance-song, or ballad, sung by dancing ladies. To accompany dance or song many stringed instruments were in vogue, and some reeds. Chess and backgammon were eagerly cultivated, as were also ingenious games of question and answer—especially subtle questions about love. From these, and also from the custom of conducting by correspondence a versified debate, there developt a literary type called *partimen*, *joc partit*, or *jeu parti*, a poetic discussion of a given theme by two or more participants.

A noteworthy example of such a contest is to be found in the Wartburg scene in *Tannhäuser;* but in the opera the opponents are represented as improvising their parts, a feat probably too difficult even for the nimble wits of the *Midi.*

The tunes were all derived, closely or remotely, from religious music—plaintive and expressive, simple melodies, innocent of counterpoint. Mother of both music and poesy was the Church. The origins of medieval lyric verse must be sought in the Latin hymns, in that magnificent stream of sacred song which, developing from the prose sequence and perhaps from the popular marching tune, began with the fourth century St. Ambrose and culminated in the *Stabat Mater* and the *Dies Iræ* of the thirteenth century. In sweetness and in majesty the Latin religious poems surpass nearly all their progeny in the vulgar tongues. Another offshoot of ecclesiastical verse was the mass of clever student songs, likewise in Latin, which the Middle Ages have bequeathed to us. Sometimes serious, oftener rollicking and irreverent, they form a curious counterpart to the solemn poetry of religion. *Meum est propositum in taberna mori* is the very embodiment of devil-may-care jollity. To liturgy and Church music Dante makes repeated reference in the *Divine Comedy.* Once he uses a hymn to mock the devil. When Satan first looms in sight, Virgil declares (*Hell,* XXXIV):

> The standards of the King of Hell appear,

parodying the lines of Fortunatus:

> The standards of the King appear,
> Shines forth the Cross's mystery.

As dusk comes upon the repentant souls waiting outside Purgatory, one of them rises and sings *Te lucis ante* "so devoutly and with such sweet notes" that the poet forgets himself entirely. This Ambrosian hymn begins as follows:

> Ere daylight wholly vanisheth,
> Creator, thee we supplicate
> That in thine endless clemency
> Thou guard us and watch over us.
>
> Let dreams be far away from us,
> Nocturnal phantoms flee from us;
> And hold in check our enemy,
> Lest he defile our purity.

Of the vernacular poetry professional minstrels were the ordinary performers. As purveyors of amusement they vied with jugglers, acrobats, and exhibitors of trained beasts. Often enough, indeed, all these callings were combined in one individual. By the twelfth century, love-songs had surpast in courtly favor every other form of distraction, and gentlefolk themselves had taken to writing them. In fact, the earliest troubadour we know was a very mighty lord indeed, William of Poitiers, Duke of Aquitaine. The professional poets, however, maintained themselves; and some of them won great fame, as Bernart de Ventadorn, Giraut de Bornelh, Arnaut Daniel. Those literary gentlemen knew their Ovid,

and from him learned the refinements of the art of love. Dante was familiar with much of their verse. In his journey through Purgatory he meets the soul of the Italian poet Guinizelli, who has something to tell of Arnaut and of Giraut, the "bard of Limousin," likewise of his own fellow-countryman, Guittone of Arezzo.

When I had fed my eyes upon the wraith,
I begged to do him service, as a grace,
With protestations such as capture faith.
And he to me: "Thy words have left a trace
Upon my memory, a trace so clear
That Lethe cannot blur it, nor efface.
But name the reason why thou dost appear
(If all thy vows have told the truth to me)
In word, and in thy look, to hold me dear."
And I to him: "Your dulcet poesy,
Whose cherisht ink nor man nor time shall mar,
Until our modern tongue shall cease to be."
"Brother, my finger points ahead, not far,
To one," he pointing said, "who merits more,
A better forger of vernacular.
Love-verses, prose romance, all written lore
Did he surpass. Let fools recite their part
Who place the bard of Limousin before.
Report, not truth, impels the foolish heart;
And so the fool doth lock his judgment fast
Before he lists to reason or to art.
Thus many praised Guittone in the past,
From mouth to mouth extolling only him.
But truth has triumpht, more than once, at last."

[*Purgatory*, XXVI.]

Sometimes the poet sang his compositions himself, sometimes he had them rendered by a musician who traveled with him, sometimes he entrusted them to a wandering minstrel. Regular performers collected great repertories, or song-books; and in this shape, for the most part, the poetry of the time has come down to us. It must be understood that the author wrote the music as well as the text, and the former is often the more important feature of the two. Many of the tunes have been transmitted to us in the manuscripts. There have been preserved also a great many biographical sketches of the poets. These are in general quite untrustworthy, being partly fantastic, partly patcht together from the poems; but they are of some importance as literature and as a link in the chain of development of prose fiction.

This amatory poetry, which flourisht in southern France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, was restricted in scope and, in general, highly artificial in form; but it contains many gems of sentiment, a world of clever conceits, and in masterful technique it has never been surpast.

The following specimen of the serious love-song called *canso* or *chanson*) is by Bernart de Ventadorn:

It is no wonder if I sing
Better than all who know that art,
For love most strongly rules my heart;
Him I obey in everything.

Body and heart and mind and thought
And strength to him I consecrate;
He draws me with a force so great,
I look on all but love as naught.

Life without love—what is it worth?
The man whose heart is never fed
With love's sweet food, indeed is dead;
He's but a cumbrance on the earth.
Lord, may thy hatred never move
So fierce against me that I may
Survive a month, a single day,
And have no heart to sing for love.

. . . . . .

It is indeed my firm belief
That, when I see my lady near,
I tremble visibly with fear,
As in the wind a quivering leaf;
My weakness before Love is such,
A child would have more sense than I.
And one who thus must conquered lie
A lady ought to pity much.

. . . . . .

Sweet is the wound that Love doth give;
He smites my heart, and smites again;
I die a hundred times with pain,
A hundred times with joy re-live.
So sweet those ills, they have surpassed
All other benefits combined;
And since the ills so good I find,
How good the recompense at last!

O God! might every lover now
As false or true distinguished be;
Might tricksters, full of calumny,
Bear each a horn upon his brow!
I'd freely give, if it were mine,
Silver and gold, all earth can show,
If my sweet lady could but know
How faithful is my love, and fine.

To *Courteous*, to my lady, go,
My song, and may she feel no woe,
Nor my long absence e'er repine.
[Mott.]

In the following strophes by Peirol, the translator has contrived to maintain the identity of rime from stanza to stanza, a customary feature of the Provençal *canso*, as it was (tho less constant) of the French lyric.

Like the swan when death is nigh,
Dying I will sing;
'T will be comeliest so to die,
Least will be the sting;
For love has caught me in his net,
And many woes my heart beset;
But this I gain: that o'er and o'er
I've learned I never loved before.

Ceaselessly to plead and sigh
Ends by wearying,—
From my looks, when she is by,
Silent prayers shall spring.

Whate'er she wills I then shall get,
And joy and love are sweeter yet
When heart, come nigh to heart, doth pour,
Unasked, what each would fain implore.

Song, to greet my fair one fly,
Asking not a thing;
Yet with prudent sighs tell why
I am languishing.
Beseech her never to forget
My loyal heart is on her set;
Her vassal, I will e'er adore,—
Or die, if that would please her more.

[Smith.]

By some chance, neither of the two love-poems just cited has a word to say of spring. Love and springtime have always been partners; and the *canso* generally opens with a brief mention of vernal flowers, leaves, and birds. As an illustration, let us take some lines by Arnaut de Maruelh:

Fair to me is April, bearing
Winds that o'er me softly blow,—
Nightingales their music airing
While the stars serenely glow;
All the birds, as they have power,
While the dews of morning wait,
Sing of joy in sky or bower,
Each consorting with his mate.

And as all the world is wearing
New delight while new leaves grow,
'T would be vain to try forswearing
Love which makes my joys o'erflow;
Both by habit and by dower
Gladness is my rightful state,
And when clouds no longer lower
Quick my heart throws off its weight.

[Smith.]

Bernart de Ventadorn begins one of his poems thus:

Fom my lady's country blowing,
When the breezes sweetly rise,
To me, it seems, is flowing
Fragrance from Paradise.

[Mott.]

Another of Bernart's songs opens with a famous simile of a skylark:

Whene'er the lark's glad wings I see
Beat sunward 'gainst the radiant sky
Till, lost in joy so sweet and free,
She drops, forgetful how to fly,—
Ah, when I view such happiness
My bosom feels so deep an ache,
Meseems for pain and sore distress
My longing heart will straightway break.

Alas, I thought I held the key
To love! How ignorant am I!
For her that ne'er will pity me
I am not able to defy;

My loving heart, my faithfulness,
Myself, my world, she deigns to take,
Then leaves me bare and comfortless
To longing thoughts that ever wake.
[Smith.]

Dante, in his *Paradiso*, used the same figure, though for a different purpose:

The little lark that soaring cleaves the skies
First sings, then holds her peace, content with that
One final note, whose sweetness satisfies.
[*Paradise*, XX.]

Dante himself was a troubadour, tho probably not a musical composer. Besides his poems to Beatrice, he wrote complimentary verses to sundry other ladies and passionate love-songs to at least one. We do not know for whom he composed the pretty little ballad below:

By reason of a garland fair
That once I saw, each single flower
Now makes me breathe a sigh.

I saw thee, Lady, bear that garland fair,
Sweetest of flowers that blow,
And over it, as floating in the air
I saw Love's angel hover meek and low,
And in his song's sweet flow,
He said, "Who looks on me
Will praise my Lord on high."

Should I be haply where a floweret blows,
A sigh must I suspire,
And say, "Where'er my gentle lady goes,
Her brow doth bear the flowerets of my Sire:
But to increase desire,
My Lady sure will be
Crowned by Love's majesty."

My slender words a tale of flowers have told
In ballad quaint and new;
And for their brightness they a garment fold,
Not such as other knew.
Therefore I pray to you,
That, when one sings it, ye
Should show it courtesy.

[Plumptre.]

Tho made from a very faulty text, this version gives an idea of the sober charm and the mystery of the original. In a different vein are the poems written for an unresponsive damsel whom Dante, for her hard-heartedness, calls Pietra, or Rock. The one that follows is a *sestina*, a difficult form invented by Arnaut Daniel and imitated later by Petrarch. In it, repetition takes the place of rime. There are (besides the envoy) six stanzas of six lines each, and these lines always end in the same six words, whose order changes, from strophe to strophe, according to a fixed scheme.

To shortened days and circle of wide shade
I have now come, alas! and snow-clad hills,
When all bright hues grow pale upon the grass;

Yet my desire hath not yet lost its green,
And so is rooted in the flinty rock,
Which speaks and hears, as though it were a lady.

So in like manner doth this fair young lady
Stand frozen, as the snow stands in the shade,
For she no more is moved than is the rock,
When the sweet season comes which warms the hills,
And makes them change from white to pleasant green,
Because it clothes them all with flowers and grass.

When on her brow she wears a wreath of grass,
From out our thoughts she drives each other lady,
Since mingle there the crisp gold and the green,
So well that Love comes there to seek their shade,
Who shuts me up amid the lowly hills,
More closely far than doth the flinty rock.

Her beauties have more power than any rock,
Her blow may not be healed by any grass;
For I have fled through valleys and o'er hills,
That I might freedom gain from this fair lady.
But 'gainst her face I seek in vain for shade,
In hill, or wall, or tree with foliage green.

Aforetime I have seen her clothed in green,
So beautiful, she might have warmed a rock
With that Love which I bear to her mere shade;
Whence in a meadow bright with greenest grass,
I wooed her, as a love-inspiring lady,
On all sides girt by highest-soaring hills.

But sooner shall the streams flow up the hills
Ere this fair growth of plant so fresh and green
Shall kindle, as is wont with gentle lady,
For me, who fain would sleep upon the rock,
All my life long, and wander, eating grass,
Only to see her garments give their shade.

Where'er the hills cast round their darkest shade,
Beneath the fresh green doth the fair young lady
Dispel it, like rock crystal in the grass.

[Plumptre.]

Most beautiful among the Pietra poems is a *canzone* on winter and its powerlessness over love. *Canzone* is the Italian equivalent of *canso*. Each stanza of our song offers first a lovely little picture of some one aspect of the frigid season, then, in its last four lines, a contrast between the outward world's cold and change and the unalterable passion in the poet's heart. The time is the winter solstice. The sun is in the constellation of the Goat, directly opposite which is the sign of the Twins. Venus is hidden by the sun's light. The cold is intensified by the cool influence of Saturn, the chilly planet among the seven. From the desert of Sahara, lying beyond the equator and therefore now plunged in summer, comes a hot blast which, as it crosses the Mediterranean, gathers moisture and envelops Europe in clouds—Europe, which never loses sight of the seven cold stars of the Dipper. Not until springtime is once more ushered in by the constellation of the Ram will

earth be green again. To all these things the lover's heart is indifferent.

I to that point in the great wheel have come,
Wherein the horizon, when the sun doth set,
Brings forth the twin-starred heaven to our sight;
And Love's fair star away from us doth roam,
Through the bright rays obliquely on it met
In such wise that they veil its tender light;
That planet, which makes keen the cold of night,
Shows himself to us in the circle great,
Where each star of the seven casts little shade:
Yet lighter is not made
One single thought of Love, that, with its weight,
O'erloads my soul, that is more hard than rock
For its fast hold of image all of rock.

There riseth up from Ethiopia's sands
A wind from far-off clime which rends the air,
Through the sun's orb that heats it with its ray.
The sea it crosses; thence, o'er all the lands
Such clouds it brings that, but for wind more fair,
O'er all our hemisphere 'twould hold its sway;
And then it breaks, and falls in whitest spray
Of frozen snow and pestilential showers,
Whence all the air is filled with wail and woe;
Yet Love who, when winds blow,
Draws up his net to heaven's eternal bowers,
Leaveth me not; so dear a lady fair
Is found that proud one, mine own Lady fair.

Fled far is every bird that loves the heat
From Europe's clime, where evermore are seen
The seven bright stars that are the lords of cold;
And others cease awhile their warblings sweet,
To sound no more until the Spring be green,
Unless their song by sorrow be controlled:
And all the creatures that are gay and bold
By nature, are from Love emancipate,
Because the cold their spirits' strength doth kill:
Yet mine more Love doth fill;
For my sweet thoughts still keep their first estate,
Nor are they given me by the change of time;
My Lady gives them in her youth's brief time.

Now have the green leaves passed their fixèd bound,
Which the Ram's power to spring-tide life did stir,
To clothe the world; and all the grass is dead,
And each fair bough of verdure stript is found,
Unless it be in laurel, pine, or fir,
Or whatsoe'er its verdure doth not shed;
And now the season is so keen and dread,
It blights the flowerets on each wide champaign,
And ill by them the hoar-frost keen is borne;
Yet the sharp amorous thorn
Love from my heart will not draw out again,
For I to bear it still am strong alway,
Long as I live, though I should live alway.

The watery mists enshrouded pour their stream
From vapours that earth holds within her womb,
And sendeth upwards from the vasty deep;
And so the path on which the sun did gleam,

And gave me joy, a river is become,
And shall be, long as winter sway doth keep.
Earth like a white-enamelled form doth sleep;
And the still water turneth all to glass,
Through the sharp cold that binds it from afar:
Yet I from this my war
Have not turned back a single step to pass;
Nor will I turn; for, if the pain be sweet,
Death must surpass whatever else is sweet.

What then, my Canzon', will become of me
In the sweet spring-tide season when with showers
Love the wide earth from all the heavens shall fill:
When, in this freezing chill,
Love doth in me, not elsewhere, show his powers?
'T will be the state of one as marble cold,
If maiden fair for heart hath marble cold.

[Plumptre.]

Beside the love-poetry we find in Provence satirical verse, frequently of a virulent type, sung to old tunes. This *genre* was called the *sirventes* (pronounced with the accent on the last syllable). Its most famous representative was the warrior-poet, Bertran de Born, who was involved in the quarrels between Henry II of England and his two oldest sons—Henry, the "young king," and Richard, afterwards Richard I. Dante finds Bertran's soul in Hell among sowers of discord, who are hackt and mutilated by a demon's sword.

But I remained to look upon the crowd;
And saw a thing which I should be afraid,
Without some further proof, even to recount,
If it were not that conscience reassures me,
That good companion which emboldens man
Beneath the hauberk of its feeling pure.
I truly saw, and still I seem to see it,
A trunk without a head walk in like manner
As walked the others of the mournful herd.
And by the hair it held the head dissevered,
Hung from the hand in fashion of a lantern,
And that upon us gazed and said: "O me!"
It of itself made to itself a lamp,
And they were two in one, and one in two;
How that can be, He knows who so ordains it.
When it was come close to the bridge's foot,
It lifted high its arm with all the head,
To bring more closely unto us its words,
Which were: "Behold now the sore penalty,
Thou, who dost breathing go the dead beholding;
Behold if any be as great as this.
And so that thou may carry news of me,
Know that Bertram de Born am I, the same
Who gave to the Young King the evil comfort.
I made the father and the son rebellious;
Achitophel not more with Absalom
And David did with his accursed goadings.
Because I parted persons so united,
Parted do I now bear my brain, alas!
From its beginning, which is in this trunk.
Thus is observed in me the counterpoise."

[*Hell*, XXVIII : Longfellow.]

Bertran's bellicose spirit is revealed in such stanzas as these:

If honor and if courage do not melt
From the two kings, we soon shall see the fields
With fragments strewn of swords and helms and shields
And men cut through the body to the belt;
In fury we shall see steeds charging past,
And many a lance through bosom and through thigh,
And joy and tears, moan and exultant cry;
Vast is the loss, the gain surpassing vast.

. . . . . .

I trust in God that, if the kings arrive,
I shall be hewn in pieces, or alive:
And if I live, great joy shall be my share,
And if I die, I shall be free from care.

[Mott.]

In similar warlike vein are these lines of the minstrel, Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, written after he had been knighted by Boniface, the valiant Marquis of Monferrat:

Gallop and trot and leap and run,
Night-watch and labor and distress
Henceforth shall be my business;
Cold I'll endure, and scorching sun.
Iron and staff and steel my arms shall be,
And forest-paths shall be my hostelry.
Discord and *sirventes* shall be my song,
While I maintain the weak against the strong.

In Italy the word *sirventes* became *serventese*, and the term was used to designate a particular metrical type. Dante wrote in this form one poem, unfortunately lost; and his account of it in the sixth chapter of the *Vita Nuova* is so curious as to be worth quoting. He has been telling how he used a pretended devotion to another "gentle lady" as a screen for his real love for the "most gentle" Beatrice. It is to be noted that the poet repeatedly discovers a mystic affinity between Beatrice and the number nine.

I declare that during the time that this lady was the screen of all the great love I felt, a wish came upon me to try to record the name of that most gentle one, and to mate it with many ladies' names, and especially with the name of this gentle lady. And taking the names of the sixty most beautiful ladies of the city where my lady was placed by the supreme Lord, I composed an epistle in the form of a *serventese*, which I shall not write down. And I should not have made mention of it save to tell a thing which, as I was composing it, miraculously came to pass, namely, that my lady's name would abide in no other number, among the names of these ladies, than the number nine.

The examples of the *sirventes* above cited are all of a dignified sort. Often the poem became downright vulgar in its vituperativeness. So, occasionally, did the versified debate, or *tenso*. This dialogue-poem, called in Italian *tenzone* or *contrasto*, later developt in Italy into the sonnet correspondence. Here are two stanzas of a dispute between Marquis Albert of Malaspina—a mem-

ber of the family which afterwards received Dante during his exile—and the genial bard Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, who, coming in ragged poverty from Provence, had been royally entertained and knighted (as we have seen) by Albert's kinsman, the Marquis of Monferrat. In this poem the rimes are the same in each couple of strophes, but change from one pair to another.

By Heaven, Raimbout, when you forsook the trade
That made you notable and well-to-do,
You acted like a fool; and I'm afraid
That he who made a gentleman of you,
Good minstrel, got you far more harm than aid
And brought upon you troubles not a few,
For then your peace and joy began to fade;
And ever since you swapt your donkey true
For a battle-horse, you've not unsheathed your blade.

O Marquis Albert, naught have you essayed
But theft and falsehood; honor you eschew.
No faith you keep, nor any promise made
To your ingenuous and loyal crew;
Your solemn pledges you have all betrayed.
If I'm no Oliver, restored anew,
You never will put Roland in the shade.
Your enemies have beat you black and blue
And stole your land, and yet no forfeit paid.

Warming to the contest, the two champions exchange at the end opprobrious epithets too coarse to repeat. Quite similar in tone is a sonnet-discussion between Dante Alighieri and a certain Bicci or Forese Donati, a

kinsman of the lady Dante married and a brother of Corso Donati, the leader of the Black party in Florence. Forese died in 1296, when Dante was thirty-one years old. The verses were probably written in the poet's early youth. Do they indicate a bitter quarrel, or are they an expression of blackguard joviality? That is a question which scholars answer differently; we shall probably never be sure. On the whole, outrageous as the language is, it seems to betoken merriment rather than spite. In any case the correspondence reveals a Dante quite diverse from the saintly youth of the *Vita Nuova*, the bookish professor of the *Convivio*, or the sublime preacher of the *Divina Commedia*. The sonnets have thus a peculiar interest because of the light they throw on a little-known side of the poet's complex nature. In the first, Dante pokes fun at Forese's wife, whose perpetual cold is due to her husband's neglect. Her mother now regrets that she ever wedded her to such a man, when she might have married her "into Count Guido's house"—a proverbial expression (it would seem) for a very wealthy family.

If you should hear her cough, the luckless mate
Of Bicci, whom his friends Forese call,
You'd say that she was used to hibernate
In northern climes, where ice envelops all.
Mid-August finds her in catarrhal state:
Imagine what she is in spring and fall!
At night, beneath the suffocating weight
Of quilts and comforters in vain she'll crawl.

Her cough, her cold, her every other ill
Spring not from wasted humors in her veins,
But from desertion in her lonely nest.
Her mournful mother cries, repining still:
"I might have married her, with little pains,
Into Count Guido's house—had I but guest!"

For his retort, Forese starts with the theme of the cough. Then he tells how, looking for hidden treasures in a graveyard, he came upon the ghost of Dante's father, bound by some strange knot. It is not known what this knot signifies—probably some wrong done to the specter in his lifetime and not yet righted by his son.

A cough shook me awake the other night,
Because I had no blankets on my bed.
As soon as day broke, out of doors I sped
To prowl and hunt for something good to bite.
How poorly Chance my labors did requite!
For I had pearls and caskets in my head,
Dreaming of golden florins bright and red—
And found, among the graves, in dismal plight,
Old Alighieri, fastened to the spot
By some hard knot—I know not of what kind.
I faced the east, and crost my breast and brow.
"For Dante's sake," he cried, "untie me now!"
Not knowing how to loosen such a knot,
I turned and fled, and never lookt behind.

It must be confest that Dante's next sonnet is very obscure. He seems to warn Forese—Bicci the Younger

(his father, it appears, was also called Bicci)—that his feasting will tie him up, probably with indigestion, but that he will be tied faster still with sheepskin, or legal parchments, and will have to spend his life near the old church of San Simone, where the prisons stood. It is too late to repent. Forese, however, knows a trade —a lucrative tho dangerous one—which may save him. What this shady business is, we can only guess. Of Stagno and his unhappy son (or rather, sons) we know nothing more than the closing line tells us. Observe that the theme of the knot, which was conspicuous in the preceding sonnet, is used to introduce this one.

Your partridge breasts will tie you hard and fast,
Bicci the Younger—tie you tight and neat.
But longer yet the sheepskin knot shall last:
The leather shall take vengeance for the meat.
Your lot near San Simone shall be cast,
Unless you cut and run, with nimble feet.
You can't cheat Justice now with plain repast
And simple life, for Justice is too fleet.
It seems, however, that you know a trade—
If that is so, you may recuperate—
A goodly trade, big money to be won;
'T is plied when bills are clamoring to be paid.
You have no time to lose: come, try your fate—
Altho it brought no good to Stagno's son.

At the beginning of Forese's reply we have a reference to the old Florentine hospital of Santa Maria in San Gallo, where alms were distributed; toward the

close, to the asylum of San Paolo a Pinti, founded by Forese's ancestors. The castle of Altafronte, by the Arno, seems to figure also as an alms-giving establishment. Frank (Francesco) and Tana are Dante's half-brother and half-sister, left in his care after the death of his father. Belluzzo or Bellino was a distant kinsman, a member of the Del Bello branch of the family. The interpretation being doubtful in several places, the translation has been made very free.

Give back your borrowed clothing to Saint Gall,
Before you sneer at other people's dress.
This winter many men are in distress,
For you have fairly stript their hospital.
And if our poverty is comical,
Please send to us for food a little less.
From Altafronte you get many a mess,
Enough to stuff you like a cannibal.
If you have Frank and Tana to support
(God give them health!) you shall have work to spare;
For with Belluzzo you have naught to do.
Our hospital shall be your last resort:
I see you now in gay apparel there
At pauper's table, with the other two.

These ungracious family allusions elicit from Dante a retort discourteous, verging on the indecent and the blasphemous. Here, too, the meaning of some of the lines is uncertain.

Bicci the Son (*whose* son, no one could say,
Unless his mother, Monna Tessa, could)
Has stowed away so much expensive food
That other people's money has to pay.
And men with gold about them will not stay,
Crying, when he comes nearer than he should:
"That fellow with the broken face is good
At picking pockets; let us edge away!"
The man whom he calls father quakes in bed
For fear his robber son will lose his life
(His *son* no more than Christ was Joseph's child!).
Of Bicci and his brothers it is said,
Each brings his booty to his brother's wife:
Worthy descendants of a race defiled!

In the last sonnet, which defies translation, Forese taunts his antagonist with cowardice and with failure to avenge some wrong or insult. Such is the poem. How Dante afterwards met Forese's soul in Purgatory among the gluttons and welcomed him as a dear friend, how he made amends for his slight to his erstwhile companion's wife, we shall learn later.

The *tenso* was not often so unsavory. In most cases the discussion was decently phrased. Witness the opening stanzas of a debate between Giraut de Bornelh, "Master of the Troubadours," and Count Raimbaut of Orange, nicknamed Linhaure, as to the respective merits of a clear and an obscure style.

Giraut de Bornelh, I would know
Why you persistently refuse
To praise th' obscure style poets use.

Now tell me why
You glorify
A verse for which all men may care:
Shall everybody have a share?

My lord Linhaure, even so.
'T is right each one should have his views
And suit himself, but my poor Muse
Knows well that I
Am rated high
When I the easiest verse prepare.
To blame me, then, is hardly fair.

From the early Sicilian school of poetry, which flourisht in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, has come an interesting debate on love. The participants are a certain Jacopo Mostacci, Pier delle Vigne (chancellor of Frederick II), and the notary Giacomo da Lentini. The doctrine expounded by the third poet was that cherisht by Dante's contemporaries.

Jacopo Mostacci

Erstwhile, as I was stirring up my wit,
Expecting to divert myself withal,
A doubt assailed me, and refused to quit:
For help against it now on you I call.
All poets say that love has might, for it
Compels the stoutest hearts to yield and fall;
But this I am not willing to admit,
Since love was never *seen* by great or small.

Well do I know there is an amorous hour
Which seems to be the offspring of delight;
And people say this hour and love are one.
Now, as I cannot comprehend this power,
I summon you to judge the case aright:
Conclude the matter that is thus begun.

Pier delle Vigne

Since love cannot be seen by mortal eyes,
And has no body, as a monarch ought,
Many there be so mad (who would be wise)
That they believe this sovereign love is naught.
But inasmuch as love so hidden lies
And lords it o'er the victims he has caught,
He merits more of worshipful surprise
Than if he showed himself to those who sought.
We see not how the magnet draws the steel,
But draw it does, and steel must needs obey,
Altho the power is no corporeal thing.
And this example bids me humbly kneel
Before the majesty of love, and pray
That men may yet believe in love, their king.

Giacomo da Lentini

Love's a desire begotten in the heart
By sweet abundance of the joyous mood.
The eyes, far more than any other part,
First waken love; the heart then gives it food.
Sometimes, indeed, it happens that love's dart
Pricks one whose eyes his mistress ne'er have wooed;

But that fierce love that makes us sting and smart
Springs from the eyes: let this be understood!
Firstly the eyes must picture to the heart
The form of everything on which they rest,
Just as it is, regardless of its worth.
The heart, receiving what the eyes impart,
Desires the thing whose image suits it best:
And this is love, which dominates the earth.

The literary theme appears again in a pair of sonnets written shortly before Dante's time. Bonagiunta Orbiciani of Lucca—the poet to whom Dante, in Purgatory, explains his "sweet new style"—finds fault with the innovations of Guido Guinizelli of Bologna, whom Dante calls "my father and the father of all my betters who ever wrote sweet rimes of love." Guido returns a soft but very effective answer.

Ser Bonagiunta da Lucca

Since you have found a novel way to write
And changed the laws of our sweet amorous lays,
Both form and matter, turning black to white,
Hoping thereby to win consummate praise,
I liken you unto a torch at night
Which sheds a flickering gleam o'er murky ways,
But shines no longer when the orb of light
Kindles the world with all-surpassing blaze.
Such subtle wit was never seen before:
Your language is so hard to understand

That not a reader can decipher it.
Altho Bologna may beget such lore,
It seems preposterous in any land
To furnish poems forth from learned writ.

Messer Guido Guinizelli di Bologna

The wise man runs not here and there at will,
But stops and thinks, and measures in his mind;
And, having thought, he holds his thought until
The truth assures him he has not been blind.
Let us beware lest pride our bosom fill;
Let us consider our degree and kind.
Mad is the man who thinks the world sees ill
And he alone is fit the truth to find.
All sorts of curious birds fly to and fro,
Diverse in speed, unlike in temperament,
And each conducts itself in its own wise.
God made a varied universe, and so
Created understandings different—
Which ought to make us slow to criticize.

When Dante, at the age of eighteen, became conscious of his love for Beatrice, he composed an allegorical sonnet, which subsequently became the first poem of the *Vita Nuova*. This piece of verse the youthful author sent, asking for an interpretation, to the famous literary men of the day, many of whom replied. Below is the sonnet, with the answers of two of Dante's friends, Guido Cavalcanti and Cino da Pistoia;

Dante Alighieri

To every heart which the sweet pain doth move,
And unto which these words may now be brought
For true interpretation and kind thought,
Be greeting in our Lord's name, which is Love.
Of those long hours wherein the stars, above,
Wake and keep watch, the third was almost nought,
When Love was shown me with such terrors fraught
As may not carelessly be spoken of.
He seemed like one who is full of joy, and had
My heart within his hand, and on his arm
My lady, with a mantle round her, slept;
Whom (having wakened her) anon he made
To eat that heart; she ate, as fearing harm.
Then he went out; and as he went, he wept.

Guido Cavalcanti

Unto my thinking, thou beheld'st all worth,
All joy, as much of good as man may know,
If thou wert in his power who here below
Is honour's righteous lord throughout this earth.
Where evil dies, even there he has his birth,
Where justice out of pity's self doth grow.
Softly to sleeping persons he will go,
And, with no pain to them, their hearts draw forth.
Thy heart he took, as knowing well, alas!
That Death had claimed thy lady for a prey;
In fear whereof, he fed her with thy heart.
But when he seemed in sorrow to depart,
Sweet was thy dream; for by that sign, I say,
Surely the opposite shall come to pass.

Cino da Pistoia

Each lover's longing leads him naturally
Unto his lady's heart his heart to show;
And this it is that Love would have thee know
By the strange vision which he sent to thee.
With thy heart, therefore, flaming outwardly,
In humble guise he fed thy lady so,
Who long had lain in slumber, from all woe
Folded within a mantle silently.
Also, in coming, Love might not repress
His joy, to yield thee thy desire achieved,
Whence heart should unto heart true service bring.
But understanding the great love-sickness
Which in thy lady's bosom was conceived,
He pitied her, and wept in vanishing.

[Rossetti.]

Sometimes, in Provence, the debate was a fictitious one, both parts being the work of one author. This is evidently the case with a conversation between a knight and his horse, and a dialogue between a jolly monk and God. In like fashion, but in very serious vein, Dante composed a colloquy between himself and some ladies who were returning from the funeral of the father of his Beatrice:

"Ye ladies, walking past me piteous-eyed,
Who is the lady that lies prostrate here?
Can this be even she my heart holds dear?
Nay, if it be so, speak, and nothing hide.

Her very aspect seems itself beside,
And all her features of such altered cheer
That to my thinking they do not appear
Hers who makes others seem beatified."
"If thou forget to know our lady thus,
Whom grief o'ercomes, we wonder in no wise,
For also the same thing befalleth us.
Yet if thou watch the movement of her eyes,
Of her thou shalt be straightway conscious.
O weep no more! thou art all wan with sighs."
[Rossetti.]

The same theme appears in the *Vita Nuova* in somewhat more extended development:

Dante

You that thus wear a modest countenance
With lids weigh'd down by the heart's heaviness,
Whence come you, that among you every face
Appears the same, for its pale troubled glance?
Have you beheld my lady's face perchance,
Bow'd with the grief that Love makes full of grace?
Say now, "This thing is thus"; as my heart says,
Marking your grave and sorrowful advance.
And if indeed you come from where she sighs
And mourns, may it please you (for his heart's relief)
To tell how it fares with her unto him
Who knows that you have wept, seeing your eyes,
And is so grieved with looking on your grief
That his heart trembles and his sight grows dim.

Ladies

Canst thou indeed be he that still would sing
Of our dear lady unto none but us?
For though thy voice confirms that it is thus,
Thy visage might another witness bring.
And wherefore is thy grief so sore a thing
That grieving thou mak'st others dolorous?
Hast thou too seen her weep, that thou from us
Canst not conceal thine inward sorrowing?
Nay, leave our woe to us: let us alone:
'T were sin if we should strive to soothe our woe,
For in her weeping we have heard her speak:
Also her look's so full of her heart's moan
That they who should behold her, looking so,
Must fall aswoon, feeling all life grow weak.

[*New Life*, XXII: Rossetti.]

Another versified form of imaginary dialogue was the *pastorela*, or *pastourelle*, which recounted the meeting of a cavalier and a peasant girl and the conversation—amorous, humorous, or both—that ensued between them. The great popularity of the *pastorela* probably suggested to Giraut de Bornelh the setting of one of his lyrics, a certain moral poem in which the author, following the song of a bird, strays into the country, and there finds three damozels lamenting over the degeneracy of the times. This piece of verse, the substance of which is strangely at variance with its introduction, might easily impress a later medieval reader as being conceived in a spirit of symbolism. It is likely that

Dante thought he saw in it some hidden meaning, and that he derived from it the first idea of one of his best allegorical lyrics, *Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute.* The three ladies who gather around the exiled poet's heart are probably Divine Right, Human Right, and Law. When Dante learns that justice and virtue are outcasts as well as himself, he is inclined to glory in his banishment. Some parts of the *canzone* follow:

Three ladies meet together round my heart,
And sit outside its gate;
Within, Love holds his state,
And lords it o'er my life with sovran sway:
So fair are they, and with such winning art,
That this lord, strong and great,
Who in my heart doth wait,
To tell of them scarce knoweth what to say.
Each one of them seems full of sore dismay,
Like one who is to weary exile born,
By this world left forlorn,
Whom nobleness and virtue nought avail.
There was—so runs their tale—
A time when all men loved them and did bless,
Now with them all are wroth, or pass them by.
So they, in loneliness,
Are come as those that do a friend's house seek,
For well they know he's there of whom I speak.

One mourns and wails in many a piteous tone,
And on her hand doth pose,
Like a dissevered rose;
Her naked arm, the pillar of her woe,

Feels the tear-gems that from her cheeks flow down;
The other hand half hides
The face where grief abides;
Unshod, unzoned, she still seems lady fair.

. . . . . .

When she had thus her name and state made known,
Great grief and shame inspired
My Lord, and he inquired
Who were the other two that with her came.

. . . . . .

Love paused awhile through sighs that from him part,
And then with tender eyes,
Where erst wild thoughts did rise,
He greets the sisters three disconsolate.
And after taking of each kind a dart,
"Lift up your heads," he cries,
"Behold the arms I prize:
See how disuse their brightness doth abate.
Bounty and Temperance, and the rest cognate
Of our high blood, must needs a-begging go."

. . . . . .

And I, who hear, as told in speech divine,
How exiles, great as these,
Are grieved, yet find some ease,
This my long banishment as honor hold;
And if man's judgment, or fate's ordered line,
Will that the world should learn
White flowers to black to turn,
To fall among the good with praise is told.
And but that I no more the star behold

Which, now far off removèd from my gaze,
Once burnt me with its blaze,
Light should I deem the burdens that oppress.

. . . . . .

[Plumptre.]

The melancholy tone of this poem vaguely suggests the *planh*, or elegy, one of the most successful types of Provençal verse. In Italy, Dante's friend Cino da Pistoia sang not only of the passing of Beatrice, but also of the untimely death of the Emperor, Henry VII. A couple of generations before Cino, a southerner called Giacomino Pugliese mourned for his lady in such fashion as this:

Death, why dost thou afflict me with such pain,
Stealing my love, and with her all my mirth?
The flower of earthly beauty hast thou slain;
Now have I naught to live for, here on earth.
Discourteous Death, to treat my pleading so!
Thou'st parted lovers, frozen pleasure's glow,
Till all is sad.
My former gayety is turned to woe,
For thou hast killed all comfort here below,
Which once I had.

Pleasure and sport and laughter once I knew,
Better by far than any other knight;
But when my lady forth to Heaven flew,
Sweet hope went with her, and forsook me quite,

Grief have I still, and endless tears and sighs;
Society and sport and song and prize
Are all forbid.
No more I see her, at my coming, rise,
No more she turns upon me her sweet eyes,
As once she did.

Compare these lines with a little poem Dante wrote on the death of a youthful companion of his Beatrice:

Death, always cruel, Pity's foe in chief,
Mother who brought forth grief,
Merciless judgment and without appeal!
Since thou hast made my heart to feel
This sadness and unweal,
My tongue upbraideth thee without relief.
And now (for I must rid thy name of ruth)
Behooves me speak the truth
Touching thy cruelty and wickedness:
Not that they be not known; but ne'ertheless
I would give hate more stress
With them that feed on love in very sooth.

Out of this world thou hast driven courtesy
And virtue, dearly prized in womanhood;
And out of youth's gay mood
The lovely lightness is quite gone through thee.

Whom now I mourn, no man shall learn from me
Save by the measure of these praises given.
Whoso deserves not Heaven
May never hope to have her company.

[*New Life*, VIII: Rossetti.]

When Beatrice herself died, Dante was struck dumb with grief. Only after the lapse of much time was he able to compose the lament from which the following stanza is taken:

The eyes that weep for pity of the heart
Have wept so long that their grief languisheth,
And they have no more tears to weep withal:
And now, if I would ease me of a part
Of what, little by little, leads to death,
It must be done by speech, or not at all.
And because often, thinking, I recall
How it was pleasant, ere she went afar,
To talk of her with you, kind damozels,
I talk with no one else,
But only with such hearts as women's are.
And I will say,—still sobbing as speech fails,—
That she has gone to Heaven suddenly,
And hath left Love below, to mourn with me.

[*New Life*, XXXII: Rossetti.]

The brilliant art bred in Provence made its way betimes into northern France, and spread not only, as we have seen, into Italy, but also into the Spanish peninsula and—very early—into Germany. By the twelfth century Provençal bards were singing their lyrics at various Italian courts; and presently we find Italian poets imitating them in the tongue of Provence. As yet there was virtually no literature in Italian, Latin being still regarded as the only correct form of native speech. But in the second quarter of the thirteenth century there

emerges a group of legal and military gentlemen—clustered about the great Emperor, Frederick II—who sang of love in the vernacular. Their verse is similar in most respects to the Provençal, and yet different enough to suggest that it was copied in part from some intermediary, probably German, as well as directly from the South Gallic songsters. Some little originality may be conceded to the prolific Italian versifiers themselves. Their school is called the Sicilian. Its most noteworthy representatives are Giacomino Pugliese, the Notary named Giacomo da Lentini, and the ill-fated Pier delle Vigne, all of whom we have met before. This last poet, chancellor of the Emperor, was accused by jealous courtiers of an attempt to poison his master. Tried and found guilty, he was blinded at San Miniato and condemned, so it is said, to be paraded on an ass from town to town before his execution. To escape this contumely, he killed himself, on the road to Pisa, by dashing out his brains against a stone pillar. Dante comes across his soul in Hell among the suicides, who, turned to trees, find no outlet for their tears and complaints save when their foliage is broken.

I heard on all sides lamentations uttered,
And person none beheld I who might make them,
Whence, utterly bewildered, I stood still.
I think he thought that I perhaps might think
So many voices issued through those trunks
From people who concealed themselves from us;

Therefore the Master said: "If thou break off
Some little spray from any of these trees,
The thoughts thou hast will wholly be made vain."
Then stretched I forth my hand a little forward,
And plucked a branchlet off from a great thorn;
And the trunk cried, "Why dost thou mangle me?"
After it had become embrowned with blood,
It recommenced its cry: "Why dost thou rend me?
Hast thou no spirit of pity whatsoever?
Men once we were, and now are changed to trees;
Indeed, thy hand should be more pitiful,
Even if the souls of serpents we had been."
As out of a green brand, that is on fire
At one of the ends, and from the other drips
And hisses with the wind that is escaping;
So from that splinter issued forth together
Both words and blood; whereat I let the tip
Fall, and stood like a man who is afraid.
"Had he been able sooner to believe,"
My Sage made answer, "O thou wounded soul,
What only in my verses he has seen,
Not upon thee had he stretched forth his hand;
Whereas the thing incredible has caused me
To put him to an act which grieveth me.
But tell him who thou wast, so that by way
Of some amends thy fame he may refresh
Up in the world, to which he can return."
And the trunk said: "So thy sweet words allure me,
I cannot silent be; and you be vexed not,
That I a little to discourse am tempted.
I am the one who both keys had in keeping
Of Frederick's heart, and turned them to and fro
So softly in unlocking and in locking,

That from his secrets most men I withheld;
Fidelity I bore the glorious office
So great, I lost thereby my sleep and pulses.
The courtesan who never from the dwelling
Of Cæsar turned aside her strumpet eyes,
Death universal and the vice of courts,
Inflamed against me all the other minds,
And they, inflamed, did so inflame Augustus,
That my glad honors turned to dismal mournings.
My spirit, in disdainful exultation,
Thinking by dying to escape disdain,
Made me unjust against myself, the just.
I, by the roots unwonted of this wood,
Do swear to you that never broke I faith
Unto my lord, who was so worthy of honor;
And to the world if one of you return,
Let him my memory comfort, which is lying
Still prostrate from the blow that envy dealt it."

[*Hell*, XIII: Longfellow.]

Giacomo, the Notary, is generally regarded as the leader of the literary group. He may have been the inventor of the sonnet, which at all events was a product of his school. Altho he wrote some rather trivial stuff, he occasionally reveals himself as a genuinely gifted poet. The following piece exemplifies the sonnet in its earliest form:

Ofttimes a lover bears his secret pain
Hid in his heart, concealing every trace;
But I, sore wounded, labor all in vain
To keep the look of anguish from my face.

I do but follow in another's train,
Nor have I choice of temper, time, or place,
Save as my lady doth command her swain.
My life and death depend upon her grace.
Hers is my heart, and therefore hers am I:
He who forsakes the counsel of his heart
Lives not on earth according to God's will.
So have I not the power to live or die
Unless my lady from my breast depart,
Taking the little breath that lingers still.

The Sicilian muse became silent in the middle of the century, on the death of Frederick. But meanwhile another school had developt in Tuscany. Concerning these Tuscan versifiers there can be no doubt that they copied Provençal models directly and closely—and preferably the Provençal literature of the decline. Poetry was for them a metrical and rhetorical exercise, the harder the better. Their best-known spokesman was Guittone d'Arezzo, already introduced, an ingenious but painful preacher of love, and a satirist of considerable rugged power. A more forward-looking songster was Chiaro Davanzati; and a good specimen of the group was Bonagiunta Orbiciani of Lucca, whom we encountered as a critic of Guido Guinizelli and his new ways.

New indeed, and fraught with mighty results, was the course followed by Guinizelli. A scholar, for a time an exile, his home was in Bologna, the great university town, where students flockt from all parts of Italy and from all the world. There lived for many years a pris-

oner, consoling himself with poetry, King Enzo of Sardinia, son of Frederick II. In the atmosphere of academic thought and scholastic philosophy and of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, Guinizelli evolved a fresh theory of love. Here and there, in Provence and possibly in Italy, we find indications that such a doctrine was vaguely taking shape; but it was first definitely formulated in Bologna, and by our poet. Strangely enough, for an author unusually gifted with powers of visualization and expression, only one of his lyrics is of special significance, the others being of more conventional type. Moreover, the other Bolognese writers that we know (they are few in number) exhibit no particular originality. Guido Guinizelli's one epoch-making ode, to which Dante continually reverts, is called *Al cor gentil ripara sempre Amore*. From it we learn that love is an attribute of the noble heart alone: no base creature can feel or understand it. But in the gentle heart it exists from birth, lying dormant until it is aroused to activity by the sight of a worthy object. A beauteous image penetrates the eyes and reaches the heart, which forthwith responds. Henceforth love is absolute master, but his rule is purely beneficent; he ennobles life, and compels the lover to seek only what is good. The worshipt lady, without entirely ceasing to be a real woman, becomes a symbol of the heavenly intelligence, or angelic nature. Allegiance to her is a religious cult. Thus the philosopher of Bologna reconciles amatory service with the theological doctrine that love is a desire for something

better than ourselves. In outward form, as well as in substance, his great *canzone* is superior to all that went before. Here are a few lines of it:

Within the gentle heart Love shelters him,
As birds within the green shade of the grove.
Before the gentle heart, in Nature's scheme,
Love was not, nor the gentle heart ere Love.
For with the sun, at once,
So sprang the light immediately; nor was
Its birth before the sun's.

. . . . . .

The sun strikes full upon the mud all day:
It remains vile, nor is the sun's worth less.
"By race I am gentle," the proud man doth say:
He is the mud, the sun is gentleness.
Let no man predicate
That aught the name of gentleness should have,
Even in a king's estate,
Except the heart there be a gentle man's.

[Rossetti.]

In the next generation Guinizelli's teaching bore fruit in Florence—at that time a thriving commercial city, which had come to the front in manufactures and business, and was just beginning to interest itself seriously in various forms of art. There Guido Cavalcanti, Dante Alighieri, and Lapo Gianni, in conjunction with Cino da Pistoia and some others, formed a cluster of new-style transcendental poets, whose work is often described, in a phrase coined by Dante himself, as the "*dolce stil nuovo*."

It should be said, however, that, as far as sentiment is concerned, only a small part of the verse of Lapo and Cino, and by no means all of Guido's and Dante's, reflects the new thought. In language and phrasing, on the other hand, in the adaptation of form to matter, the whole output of this little group rises to an excellence unattained before in Italian and seldom equalled in the world's literature. Concerning the nature of love Guido Cavalcanti composed a darkly philosophical *canzone* beginning *Donna mi prega*. The doctrine of gentleness inculcated in the last of the above-cited stanzas was expounded at length by Dante in his ode on nobility, summarized early in this book. In the *Vita Nuova*, too, Alighieri was following Guinizelli when he wrote thus of Love and the gentle heart:

Love and the gentle heart are one same thing,
Even as the wise man in his ditty saith:
Each, of itself, would be such life in death
As rational soul bereft of reasoning.
'T is Nature makes them when she loves: a king
Love is, whose palace where he sojourneth
Is called the Heart; there draws he quiet breath
At first, with brief or longer slumbering.
Then beauty seen in virtuous womankind
Will make the eyes desire, and through the heart
Send the desiring of the eyes again;
Where often it abides so long enshrin'd
That Love at length out of his sleep will start.
And women feel the same for worthy men.

[*New Life*, XX: Rossetti.]

Guinizelli, one must remember, was the poet whom Dante found in Purgatory, among the shades of the amorous, and greeted as his father in poesy—the one who compared the two famous bards of Provence. On meeting him and learning his identity, Dante "walkt thoughtful for a long while, gazing at him deaf and speechless." So deeply did he feel his indebtedness.

In another part of Purgatory, where the gluttons are doing penance, our Florentine is introduced to Bonagiunta Orbiciani, of the early Tuscan school, concerning whom we spoke not long ago as a critic of Guinizelli. To him Dante briefly expounds the essence of the "new style," as he understands it. The old poetry consisted in artistic treatment of conventional themes; the new, in direct, sincere expression of feeling. All other apparent variances between the two fashions can be traced to this fundamental difference. Bonagiunta speaks first, asking whether he sees before him the author of *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*, one of the odes of the *Vita Nuova*. The "Notary" whom he presently mentions is Giacomo da Lentini, leader of the Sicilian school; "Guittone," is Guittone d'Arezzo, the most conspicuous member of the early Tuscan group to which the speaker himself belonged.

> "Do I behold that poet here above
> Who publisht, down below, the novel screed,
> *Ladies who have intelligence of Love?*"

And I to him: "A man am I who heed
What Love dictates within, and copy plain
The lessons his inspiring voice doth read."
"O brother, now I see," quoth he, "the chain
Which bound the Notary, Guittone, me,
Who never could that sweet new style attain.
Your close-pursuing pens I clearly see,
Attentive to the voice that leads before—
Which surely never did befall us three.
And one who ponders deep the problem o'er,
Naught else shall find 'twixt one and t' other style."
And, satisfied with that, he said no more.

[*Purgatory*, XXIV.]

From his Provençal and Italian predecessors Dante inherited an abundance of lyric forms and poetic conventions; but they belonged to a movement which, having past its prime, was producing little more than stale conceits. Into this decadent literature he infused real feeling, new art, fresh thought and imagination, and, quickening it with his vigorous personality, made of it a thing of beauty all his own.

CHAPTER V

LANGUAGE AND POETRY

DANTE ALIGHIERI was deeply interested in the art of versification and in the literary possibilities of various kinds of language. In his use of Italian for serious exposition he was a bold innovator. Even he had to reach by stages the conclusion that the vernacular is superior to Latin as a means of written communication. His preserved letters are all in Latin. When he was planning the prose of his youthful *Vita Nuova*, he discust with his friend Guido Cavalcanti the advisability of employing his native speech, and Cavalcanti approved. It is likely that Guido, older than Dante, a distinguisht poet and scholar, a man of weight in the community, of wealthy and notable family, son-in-law of Farinata degli Uberti, and at one time a member of the Great Council, had a considerable share in the development of the younger author, whose influence was in turn potent upon himself. In the course of the *New Life*, Dante tells us that the vulgar tongue may properly be substituted for Latin, but only in dealing with the subject of love. His reason is peculiar: "The first man that began to compose as a vernacular

poet was impelled thereto because he would fain make his words understood by a woman, for whom it was difficult to understand Latin verses. And this is an argument against those who rime on any theme but an amorous one; inasmuch as this fashion of speech was first invented to speak of love." Later, in his Latin treatise, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, his judgment is so broadened as to admit the use of the vulgar tongue in works dealing not only with love, but also with war and righteousness; and to fortify this advanced position, he cites authorities, his examples being drawn from writers whom we have already met: for love, Arnaut Daniel in Provençal, Cino da Pistoia in Italian; for war, only the Gallic Bertran de Born, there being as yet no Italian war-poet; for righteousness, the troubadour Giraut de Bornelh and himself. In this passage, as elsewhere repeatedly in the book, when he has to quote his own verses, he refers to himself, not by name, but as the friend of Cino. In his *Convivio*, by way of apology for not writing the prose of this encyclopedic work in Latin, he launches into an elaborate defence of the mother tongue, whose detractors he holds up to infamy. Some of them, he says, are moved by "blindness of discrimination," some by a desire to account for their own failures, some by a hankering to display their erudition, some by envy of more successful authors, some by a meanness of spirit which leads them to think ill of what is their own. As for himself, he loves his Italian speech not only for its nearness to him, its excellence, and his long familiarity with it, but also be-

cause of the benefits he has received from it and because its interests and his are the same. By means of the vernacular his father and mother became acquainted; to it, then, he owes his existence. Through the medium of this same vernacular he was led to a knowledge of Latin, and thence to other fields of learning. His cultivation of it wins fame for it and for himself. The mother tongue, he concludes, "shall be a new light, a new sun, which shall rise when the old sun shall set, and shall illumine those who are in darkness and in obscurity because the old sun shines not upon them." In our twentieth century the case is no longer pending: the vernacular has for ages been supreme; it is Latin that has to beg for its life. We therefore can hardly imagine the dismay which such revolutionary sentiments must have aroused in conservative breasts six hundred years ago. A Bolognese scholar, Giovanni del Virgilio, towards the close of Dante's life, sent the great poet a metrical Latin letter in which he gently reproved him for entrusting his precious thoughts to an ignoble popular dialect, rather than to the recognized language of learning. Dante, perhaps to prove that his preference for Italian was not due to ignorance, responded in a Latin eclogue, quite as elegant as the epistle of his critic; then each participant contributed to the debate one eclogue more. To this pleasing correspondence we referred when dealing with the story of Dante's life. It is noteworthy that our poet used Latin once more in his tremendously earnest political tract, *De Monarchia*.

We have just spoken of Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia* —or, as Villani calls it, *De Vulgari Eloquio*—a Latin treatise on vernacular poetics. The author never finisht it, and we do not know how long it was intended to be. At least four books were planned, but only one and a good part of another were completed. The introductory first book is of proper dimensions for a volume of monumental size. Early in the *Convivio* Dante mentions his purpose of dealing separately with this theme. His work was known to Villani and to Boccaccio, but, it would seem, to scarcely anyone else, until it was publisht in an Italian version by Trissino in 1529, at a time when scholars were about to engage in a long and furious controversy over the question of language. The first book is devoted to the origin of speech, its varieties, and the fitness of different types of popular Italian for literary use. Having distinguisht Latin, which he calls "grammar," from the spoken idiom, Dante declares that the latter is the nobler of the two, because it is older, because it is used in some form by all humanity, and because it is natural, not artificial like Latin. He evidently regarded the latter as a tongue consciously contrived by scholars.

The author now proceeds to discuss the beginnings of human utterance, the character of the earliest language, and the first word articulated by man. Hebrew, he thinks (later he revised this opinion), was the original tongue, common at first to all mankind. But since the destruction of the tower of Babel diversity has pre-

vailed. A rough classification follows. The eastern populations of Europe, tho linguistically at variance on many points, generally agree in using "*io*" (presumably *ja*) for "yes." In the west we find three great divisions: the *oïl* (or *oui*) type, which is French; the *oc* type, or Provençal (Languedoc); the *sì* type, or Italian. Spanish seems to be left out of account. But in the Italian peninsula many varieties of speech exist, every city or province having its own dialect. Where are we to find a real Italian language, sufficiently general, elegant, and accurate to form a poetic vehicle? One after another, the local idioms are past in review and are found wanting, every one being disqualified by some oddity or some plebeian turn. Behind them all, however, lurks an ideal language, more apparent in some than in others, intelligible and agreeable to the cultivated ears of all regions. This ideal tongue, differently disguised under different dialects, must be disclosed, and then literature will possess its proper instrument. To discover and rightly to use it, the poet needs profound learning and creative power.

Of the themes fit for treatment in the vernacular—arms, love, righteousness—we have already spoken. The necessary degree of elegance and purity of diction varies according to the style of composition. Three grades are distinguisht: the tragic or sublime; the comic or intermediate; the elegiac or vulgar. It must be observed that the terms "tragic" and "comic" carried in Dante's time no association with the drama. The

only Italian representative of the tragic class is the *canzone*, or ode, which demands the same rhetorical skill that is displayed in the great Latin poems of old. The comic style, he tells us, befits the less elevated and more familiar ballad and sonnet. We ask ourselves, therefore, with some wonder, why Dante called his own masterpiece a "Comedy." From what he has just said, we infer that he never would have given such a name to most of his odes, and we must conclude that the language of the *Divina Commedia*, in the opinion of its author, is less consistently sublime than that of the *canzoni*.

The *canzone* must be made up of serious thoughts clothed in noble verse. The best length for a line merits careful discussion; and so does the choice of a style, the flowery or rhetorical being preferred by our critic. No words should be admitted whose sense or sound is in any way unpleasant. We must avoid the cacophonous, the childish, the lubricous, the over-long and over-short. The examples of objectionable words are very odd; to our ears many of them are quite inoffensive. Most precious are the rules next given for the construction of the stanza. With a few precepts for rime, and for the number of verses in a strophe, the book breaks off.

In devising two of his *canzoni*, Dante felt the need of expressions incompatible with his "tragic" standard; and in both cases he warns his reader that his speech is going to be *aspro*, or "harsh." The ode on nobility, already cited, contains in the first stanza this passage: "I shall lay down my sweet style, which I have followed

in treating of love; and I shall speak of goodness, through which a man is truly noble—refuting with *harsh*, cunning rime the false, vile judgment of those who maintain that the source of nobility is wealth." Another *canzone* begins thus: "I will be as *harsh* in my speech as, in her deeds, is this beauteous Rock, which daily gets more hardness and cruelty." This is one of the group of poems, previously referred to, in which the name Pietra, or Rock, is given to a certain insensible young lady. In this particular composition, exasperation gets the better of rhetorical smoothness. Generally, however, our author seeks and successfully reproduces in the vulgar tongue the dignity and sweetness that he rightly felt to be inherent in Latin verse, and especially in that of Virgil. When Dante first meets the soul of that ancient poet, outside the mouth of Hell, he exclaims, on learning the name of the shade:

"Now canst thou be that Virgil, thou the spring
Whence flows of eloquence so broad a brook?"
I answered him with forehead reddening.
"Blest be the lasting zeal that made me look—
Thou light of poethood, thou light and pride!—
Blest be the love that made me seek thy book!
Thou art my master, thou my only guide;
For thou alone art he from whom I got
That beauteous style men honor far and wide."

[*Hell*, I.]

CHAPTER VI

DIDACTIC, MORAL, SATIRICAL, AND RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

EPIC and lyric were by no means the only kinds of verse the Middle Ages knew. French literature has generally aimed not only to amuse but to teach, and the instructive bent is particularly evident in medieval times. Fables, poems on behavior, on zoology, on minerals, on the calendar, on history, chronicles of crusades and other notable events, lives of saints, accounts of miracles, visions of the other world are in their several ways didactic, scarcely less so than the copious sermons and religious treatises that have come down to us. Even epics and romances were enjoyed in considerable measure for the examples of chivalrous conduct they afforded.

In days when books were comparatively rare, there was an inevitable demand for a compendium of knowledge, and to fill this need encyclopedias were constructed and reconstructed from age to age. In old Roman times such compilations were made by Varro, Celsus, the elder Pliny, and his follower Solinus. The works of the last two—the great *Natural History* and the *Polyhistor*—were probably familiar to Dante, who

doubtless knew also the *Origins* or *Etymologies* of St. Isidore of Seville, an encyclopedic lexicon which belongs to the period of transition from ancient to medieval civilization. Coming down to the century of Dante's birth, we find at least half a dozen important collections of miscellaneous information, the most interesting of which is the French *Image du Monde*, by a certain Gossuin, based in part on a Latin *Imago Mundi*. The author, a learned man, animated by an earnest moral purpose, was not devoid of the scientific spirit, so uncommon among his contemporaries. Very ingenious are his attempts to enhance the significance of his statements by means of concrete illustration. If, he tells us, there were a hole through the earth along the line of its axis, a stone dropt in at the pole would fall as far as the center and there would stop. A weight falling from the altitude of the fixt stars would take a hundred years to reach the earth. The sun being 170 times as big as our globe, and 1,055 diameters distant, a man covering 25 miles a day would require 7,157 years to journey to it; if Adam, then, had started at his creation, he would still in 1247 (the date of writing) have 712 years to travel. The *Image du Monde*, immensely popular for about three hundred years, was imitated by that eminent Florentine man of law, Brunetto Latini, Dante's elderly friend and counselor. Constrained to pass some years in Paris, he wrote his *Trésor* in French, but it was translated into Italian while he was still alive. Many fine manuscripts of it are extant from the end of the thirteenth

century. It consists of nine books, falling into three parts, which offer convenient tho not always accurate instruction in cosmography, morals, and politics.

If we take into account the vast Latin literature of the medieval period, with all its scientific, philosophical, and theological discussions, we shall see the purposeful element heavily outweighing the merely pleasurable. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the mystic, the organizer, the preacher of the second crusade; those lights of religion, Hugo and Richard of the monastery of St. Victor near Paris; Peter Lombard, author of the useful compilation called the *Sentences;* the brilliant Abelard; the venturesome Siger of Brabant, who, as Dante says, "argued enviable truths": these are a few illustrious names culled almost at random. Before them, and outside of France, we encounter in Italy the great moralist, administrator, and transmitter of theological teaching, Gregory I; the learned Alcuin at the court of Charlemagne; the Venerable Bede and St. Anselm in England. Later, the mighty Franciscan scholar Roger Bacon, who, educated at Oxford and dividing his time between England and Paris, dealt with all kinds of knowledge, advocated the experimental method, and preacht the un-medieval doctrine of progress in science; Duns Scotus of Oxford, subtlest of metaphysicians; his pupil Occam, an opponent of the Papacy, who studied the phenomena of cognition and accelerated the widening breach between philosophy and theology. Spain was the home of the studious Moor, Averrhoes, who by his "great

commentary" on Aristotle made that almost forgotten philosopher once more known to Europe. Germany may boast of Albertus Magnus, professor at Cologne in the thirteenth century, one of the most marvelous scholars of all time, whose learning embraced virtually the whole field of knowledge and speculation, and whose intelligence well matcht his stupendous erudition. He was justly called the Universal Doctor. Absorbing the teachings of Aristotle and of his Moorish expositor, he imparted them to his still more famous pupil, St. Thomas Aquinas, who finisht the task, begun by his master, of reconciling Aristotelianism with Christian dogma. From the time of the Evangelists, Christianity had been strongly influenced by Greek thought; and in the fourth and fifth centuries a fusion of Christian and Platonic philosophy had been effected mainly by that keen, eloquent Carthaginian Father, St. Augustine. With the unerring and untiring logic of St. Thomas the process of adaptation came to completion. He lived from 1227 to 1274, and taught in Paris and Naples. His three great works are his commentary on Aristotle, his *Summa contra Gentiles*, and his enormous *Summa Theologiæ*, wherein wellnigh all imaginable subjects related to religion, dogma, or philosophy receive full analytical discussion. He is still the chief exponent of Catholic doctrine. Another weighty authority and a most engaging personality is the mystic, St. Bonaventure, known as the Seraphic Doctor, a fellow-countryman and contemporary of St. Thomas. The stirring apocalyptic prophet, Joachim of

Calabria, should not be left out of account. One of his disciples, interesting in himself and notable for his spiritual kinship to Dante, is Ubertino da Casale, another mystic, whose *Arbor Vitæ Crucifixæ Jesu* dates from 1305.

Didactic in a secular way is the celebrated Latin treatise of Andræus Capellanus on the *Art of Polite Love-making*, a codification of the conventions of amatory literature. Closer to reality was a member of Dante's group, a notary, artist, and poet named Francesco da Barberino, who, familiar with the literature of northern and southern France, gives us in his *Reggimento e costumi di donna* a picture of woman and her duties at different ages and in different stations, and in his *Documenti d'Amore* (which he turned into Latin prose and commented) an account of Love's teachings uttered by Eloquence. To the category of instructive writers belongs perhaps that gossipy moralist, Walter Map, with his *Courtiers' Frivolities;* so, assuredly, the British historians, Henry of Huntington, William of Malmsbury, Giraldus Cambrensis, and the romantic Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose *History of the Kings of Britain* contains the earliest development of the Arthurian fictions. He was followed by Wace, who wrote in French verse and was translated into English by Layamon early in the thirteenth century. In France, two excellent chroniclers fall well within our period: Villehardouin, who described in terse French prose the taking of Constantinople in the fourth crusade; and Joinville, the Boswell of St. Louis. Beside these

stands an excellent Latin account of the crusades, the *Historia Transmarina* of William of Tyre.

Didactic, too, in its own fashion, is satire, that convex mirror of human defects. Under this head we may put fables, whether in Latin or in the vernacular. Akin to the fable is the interminable beast-romance known as the *Roman de Renard*, a mass of episodes in which human beings are depicted in the guise of animals—Reynard the Fox, Isengrim the Wolf, Bruin the Bear, Noble the Lion, and their companions. Generally satirical, but hardly uplifting in purpose, are the *fabliaux*, short stories in verse. Nearly always comic, realistic, reflecting the life of the common people, they are often grossly indecent. Some of them deal with incidents later utilized by Chaucer, Boccaccio, and lesser tale-writers; one, the *Peasant Physician*, afforded a plot to Molière. Of the two masters of story-telling just mentioned, the Italian, Boccaccio, stands already on the edge of the Renaissance, but his great English contemporary may still be called medieval. Chaucer and Dante represent in pure literature the best that the Middle Ages have to offer. The genial Englishman and the serious Florentine were both artists to their finger-tips; both understood and knew how to portray human character—a rare gift in their day; and both seem destined to gladden and enlighten successive generations as long as our civilization shall last.

At once satiric and didactic is the greater part of the most renowned French work of the Middle Ages, a long

poem entitled the *Roman de la Rose*. This romance was written in the thirteenth century by two authors, both young, but of quite opposite temperaments, and the result is a curiously incongruous composition. It begins as a dainty, sentimental allegory, and continues as a combination of ill-digested encyclopedic erudition and scathing, sometimes witty, criticism of society, especially clerics and women. Launcht about 1230 by the courtly Guillaume de Loris, the poem resumed its course some fifty years later under the guidance of the cynical Jean de Meung, who, after prolonged divagations, finally brought it to a conclusion. Here is the story: On a fine spring day the author, whose name is Lover, finds himself in a dream before a garden, reserved for joys and virtues, closed to everything ugly and base. Painted on the walls outside are Hatred, Age, Felony, Meanness, Greed, Poverty, Hypocrisy, for which the gates never open. Lover knocks. Mistress Idleness lets him in, telling him that the garden belongs to Pleasure, husband of Gladness, who has for companions Liberality, Youth, Wealth, Grace, and the like. Near a fountain he sees splendid flowers, among them a Rose, fairest and sweetest of all, symbol of the Beloved. At this moment Love pierces him with five arrows—Beauty, Sincerity, Serenity, Courtesy, Sweet Converse; then, after having received his homage, kindly explains to him the method of winning a heart. Thereupon Welcome leads him to the Rose; but just as he is on the point of plucking it, he is thrust back by Disdain, Slander, Shame, and Fear.

Now Mistress Reason appears and in a fine harangue exhorts him to wisdom. None the less he renews his attempt. He has so far succeeded as to kiss the Rose, when a new opponent arises. Jealousy, awakened by Slander, erects around the flowers a fortress, in which Welcome is imprisoned. With a long plaint of the disconsolate Lover, Guillaume de Loris breaks off his narration. His work comprises some 4,000 verses, while the sequel by Jean de Meung consists of about 18,000. In it, we presently hear Mistress Reason discoursing interminably on all manner of subjects. Lover, unconvinced by her abundance, seeks the counsel of Friend, who consoles him by attacking social conventions and extolling nature. Then Love, toucht by Lover's grief, collects his retainers and besieges the tower where Welcome is confined. Among his knights is False Looks, who expounds the creed of hypocrisy. During the siege Mistress Nature comes on the scene, and unbosoms her cosmic knowledge to her chaplain, Genius. He, joining the attackers, praises the joys of the flesh and denounces asceticism; after which he hurls at the fort a torch given him by Love. The barons then rush to the assault, and, speedily winning the fight, rescue Welcome, under whose guidance Lover plucks the Rose.

The *Roman de la Rose* was appreciated in England, where it was translated by Chaucer. In Italy several versions of it were made. A certain fourteenth-century manuscript seems to have contained two, one of which, called *Il Fiore*, is of peculiar interest. It consists of a

series of 232 sonnets, in which the romance (originally composed in short rimed couplets) is advantageously abridged, being paraphrased with conspicuous artistry. Apparently this adaptation was written about 1295, when Dante was thirty years old. The author names himself twice, once as Durante and once as Ser Durante. Now, inasmuch as *Dante* is a shortened form of *Durante*, some critics have conjectured that the sonnet sequence was penned by none other than Dante Alighieri. In favor of this hypothesis is the striking excellence of the verses. Against it may be alleged the language of the *Fiore*, more archaic than Alighieri's, and the fact that this paraphrase is never mentioned by the great poet nor by any of his biographers or commentators. Moreover, the name Dante or Durante was very prevalent; and our Dante never, so far as we know, used the long form, *Durante*. Whoever the author may have been, he was a clever one, and his *Flower* is one of the best Italian examples of the allegorical style—a style relatively new in secular poetry, but fated to enjoy long favor.

The origins, development, and significance of artistic symbolism, a subject of vital importance for the reader of Dante, will be discust in another chapter. Suffice it to say here that allegory, hitherto confined in the main to religious matters, was brought into literary fashion by the *Roman de la Rose*, and pervaded Gallic poetry for two centuries.

Allegory was of course one of the principal factors in the pageant, and in certain forms of the drama. In

medieval Europe, as in ancient Greece, religion was the mother of the theater. The eastern Church, from the sixth century to the ninth, reveals especially in homilies a strong dramatic tendency; but in the west it was mainly from the liturgical office at Easter and Christmas that dramatic performances were actually evolved—first, perhaps, through accompanying costumed pantomime; next through a combination of pantomime and responsive service, with further adaptation of the Bible text and ritual to speech and answer; then through the invention of free dialogue in the vulgar tongue to illustrate and develop the sacred story. Of the second stage we have several Latin examples from the twelfth century. In one of them, the *Sponsus*, or *Bridegroom*, which presents in dramatic form the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, some French strophes appear beside the Latin. The oldest drama in French belongs to the same century. It is the play of *Adam*, composed in varying metres, and intended for performance in the square before the church. Fortunately it has come down to us with very elaborate scenic directions. God himself is shown; Hell and Heaven are represented, the latter on a higher level than the stage. Devils run about the street. The piece deals at length with Adam's fall, more briefly with the murder of Abel and the utterances of the Prophets. In the last scene, Latin alternates with French. Among the several types of drama which presently came into being, we find, beside the religious Mysteries and Miracles, little plays consisting of farce and satire, and

also the Moralities, in which the characters are allegorical figures.

In England the drama grew up as in France, and at about the same time. Spain and Germany soon followed. In Italy the development of the theater was late, and somewhat peculiar. We see in fifteenth-century Florence certain "sacred representations," not unlike the Mysteries, and dealing with such themes as the Prodigal Son and the Wise and Foolish Virgins, produced with Medicean magnificence. These are an outgrowth, it would seem, of little dramatic sketches, pious and unassuming, which in turn were evolved from artless religious songs called *laudi*, written, like the plays, in the vulgar tongue. Such poems were originally sung by great processions of penitents, and gave simple expression to their whole-souled fervor. A favorite theme for the lauds was the Crucifixion, and the songs sometimes took the form of a dialogue, in alternating strophes, between Christ and his Mother. The element of Scriptural conversation thus introduced was expanded into something that might be used as a play; an early example is the *Lazarus*. In Italy, then, the religious drama first arose, in the main, from vernacular songs of worship, not, as elsewhere, from the Latin ritual, altho some traces of Latin liturgical drama are to be found, in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, in the Devotions of Padua and Friuli. It is appropriate that this form of cult should have had, in that country, an origin not entirely ecclesiastical; for the religious awakening

which, in the midst of the calamities and hard times of the thirteenth century, thrilled Umbria, then Tuscany, and voiced itself in song, was to some extent a reaction from the worldliness of the clergy. A good part of western Europe felt something of the unrest. In many regions the protest manifested itself, as early as the twelfth century, in the form of heresy or rebellion. The Albigensians sought satisfaction in heterodox beliefs; the Waldensians attempted to restore the conditions of early Christianity; other sects, less powerful than these, seceded from authority. The Umbrians remained faithful, but they opposed to the mundane spirit then rife among clerics a life of disinterested piety, spontaneous feeling, and communion with God. They rendered the Church an inestimable service by quickening the emotional activity so essential to religion. Without them, there could have been no Dante. Gentleman and scholar tho the poet was, his mind and heart were profoundly affected by their primitive mysticism.

At the head of this religious movement is one of the sweetest and divinest figures that ever walkt the earth, St. Francis of Assisi. The stories, true or apocryphal, that are told of him testify to the impression he made on his contemporaries. Everyone has heard of his sermon to the birds. "Sister birds," he said, leaving his companions on the road, while he entered the field to address the flock, "ye are greatly beholden to God, your creator, and always in every place ye must praise him, for that he hath given you freedom to fly everywhere;

also he hath given you twofold and threefold raiment; moreover, he did preserve your seed in the ark of Noah, that your race should not perish. Furthermore, ye are beholden to him for the element of air, which he hath consigned to you. In addition, ye sow not, neither do ye reap: God feeds you, and gives you rivers and springs for your drink; he gives you mountains and valleys for your refuge, and tall trees to make your nests; and forasmuch as ye can neither spin nor cook, God clothes you you and your children. Therefore your Creator loves you much, since he gives you such bounties. Beware, then, my sisters, of the sin of ingratitude, and strive always to praise God." And the birds reverently bowed their heads to earth. When the town of Gubbio was terrorized by a huge wolf, which devoured flocks and men, St. Francis went forth to seek the savage creature. As it approacht with open jaws, he made the sign of the cross and said: "Come here, brother wolf. I command thee, in Christ's name, to do no harm to me nor to others." Whereupon the beast threw itself at his feet, tame as a lamb. Then the saint, having rebuked the animal for its grievous misdeeds, which had rendered it an object of hatred to all, offered to make peace between it and the people of Gubbio. The wolf presented its paw in token of assent. And from that time until its death it dwelt, gentle and unmolested, in the streets and houses of Gubbio, loved by all the inhabitants.

More authentic are the legends of his conversion from a life of amusement and ambition to one of utter conse-

cration to God and his fellow-men; of his mystic espousal of Lady Poverty, a scene depicted by various artists, notably by Giotto in a fresco in the church of San Francesco in Assisi; of his unsuccessful effort to convert the Sultan of Egypt. His devotion to Poverty—that Lady who once made the destitute fisherman, Amyclas, fearless against the terrible Cæsar—first declared itself when his father, Pietro Bernardone, a tradesman of Assisi, after vainly trying to subdue his son's resolution to renounce the world, summoned the determined lad before the episcopal court of the town; there Francis took off his clothes and handed them over to Pietro, avowing that he would keep nothing of his father's. Thus it was that Lady Poverty, who, since the death of Jesus, her first spouse, had found no one to love her, at last met in Francis a congenial mate. When he was dying, he bade his followers strip his body and let it lie naked on the bare ground, that his soul might rise to Heaven from the lap of Poverty. In his last years he had retired to a shelter built by his disciples on the wild and rugged Mt. Alvernia, between the upper Arno and the source of the Tiber. There it was that, according to contemporary evidence, Christ appeared to him, in 1224, and imprinted on his hands, feet, and side the marks of his own five wounds, which signs Francis bore until his death, two years later; this miracle of the Stigmata was confirmed by three papal bulls. His existence was closely patterned on that of his Master, and accumulating legends emphasized the likeness. His

gospel was one of self-abnegation, purity, and all-embracing love. Through all his asceticism and all his disappointments he preserved a playful fancy, a delight in out-door life, and a keen interest in his fellow-creatures. Even to the skeptical twentieth-century traveler, Assisi, the tiny city where he first dwelt, gloriously percht on a shoulder of Mt. Subasio, opposite Perugia, and dominating a vast prospect of indescribable beauty, seems like a holy place; and the visitor is ready to declare with Dante that the Tuscan form of the name, *Ascesi*, which appears to mean "I have risen," is an inadequate designation of the birthplace of such a Sun.

Tho happy in the main, the religious life of St. Francis was not free from struggles and sorrows. His conflict with his father was a bitter one. Then it was by no means easy for him to secure recognition for his new order of rope-wearers. The Church had to be on its guard against innovations that might lead to heresy, and against excess of zeal which might alienate the feeble. Reluctantly and informally Innocent III approved the Rule of St. Francis in 1210; not until 1223 did the founder obtain from Honorius III a definite, official sanction. His later career was saddened by dissension and spiritual backsliding among his followers. Two years after his death he was canonized by Gregory IX. Dante puts into the mouth of St. Thomas, whom he beholds in the sun, the following account of St. Francis:

Between Tupino and the stream that falls
Down from the hill elect of blessed Ubald,
A fertile slope of lofty mountain hangs,
From which Perugia feels the cold and heat
Through Porta Sole, and behind it weep
Gualdo and Nocera their grievous yoke.
From out that slope, there where it breaketh most
Its steepness, rose upon the world a sun
As this one does sometimes from out the Ganges;
Therefore let him who speaketh of that place,
Say not Ascesi, for he would say little,
But Orient, if he properly would speak.
He was not yet far distant from his rising
Before he had begun to make the earth
Some comfort from his mighty virtue feel.
For he in youth his father's wrath incurred
For certain Dame, to whom, as unto death,
The gate of pleasure no one doth unlock;
And was before his spiritual court
Et coram patre unto her united;
Then day by day more fervently he loved her.
She, reft of her first husband, scorned, obscure,
One thousand and one hundred years and more,
Waited without a suitor till he came.
Naught it availed to hear, that with Amyclas
Found her unmoved at sounding of his voice
He who struck terror into all the world;
Naught it availed being constant and undaunted,
So that, when Mary still remained below,
She mounted up with Christ upon the cross.
But that too darkly I may not proceed,
Francis and Poverty for these two lovers
Take thou henceforward in my speech diffuse.

Their concord and their joyous semblances,
The love, the wonder, and the sweet regard,
They made to be the cause of holy thoughts;
So much so that the venerable Bernard
First bared his feet, and after so great peace
Ran, and, in running, thought himself too slow.
O wealth unknown! O veritable good!
Giles bares his feet, and bares his feet Sylvester
Behind the bridegroom, so doth please the bride!
Then goes his way that father and that master,
He and his Lady and that family
Which now was girding on the humble cord;
Nor cowardice of heart weighed down his brow
At being son of Peter Bernardone,
Nor for appearing marvelously scorned·
But regally his hard determination
To Innocent he opened, and from him
Received the primal seal upon his Order.
After the people mendicant increased
Behind this man, whose admirable life
Better in glory of the heavens were sung,
Incoronated with a second crown
Was through Honorius by the Eternal Spirit
The holy purpose of this Archimandrite.
And when he had, through thirst of martyrdom,
In the proud presence of the Sultan preached
Christ and the others who came after him,
And, finding for conversion too unripe
The folk, and not to tarry there in vain,
Returned to fruit of the Italic grass,
On the rude rock 'twixt Tiber and the Arno
From Christ did he receive the final seal,
Which during two whole years his members bore.

When He, who chose him unto so much good,
Was pleased to draw him up to the reward
That he had merited by being lowly,
Unto his friars, as to the rightful heirs,
His most dear Lady did he recommend,
And bade that they should love her faithfully;
And from her bosom the illustrious soul
Wished to depart, returning to its realm,
And for its body wished no other bier.
[*Paradise*, XI : Longfellow.]

Thus speaks St. Thomas Aquinas, among the souls of enlighteners of humanity. Our Father, he avers, provided the Holy Church with two mighty champions, who should aid her to follow Christ, her Bridegroom, with greater confidence and greater steadfastness. The one, seraphic in his love, was St. Francis; the other, his Spanish contemporary, St. Dominic, was like a cherub in his wisdom. These champions of Christianity are the founders of the two powerful orders, the Franciscan and the Dominican, which Dante elsewhere calls the two chariot-wheels of the Church.

St. Francis left little in the way of literature, altho we are told that his poetic spirit would occasionally break into improvised verse, both Italian and French. We have, however, a few Latin *Laudes* from his pen, one of them, the *Laudes Creatoris*, in his own handwriting, a very striking composition. Most famous is a balanced and irregularly rimed prose composition attributed to him, the so-called *Song of the Sun*, in the Umbrian dialect. Here is a part of it:

Praised be thou, my Lord, by sister moon and the stars. In heaven hast thou shaped them bright and precious and beautiful.

Praised be thou, my Lord, by brother wind and by air and cloud and clearness and every weather by which thou givest sustenance unto thy creatures.

Praised be thou, my Lord, by brother fire, wherewith thou dost light us at night; and he is beautiful and cheery and stout and strong.

Praised be thou, my Lord, by our sister mother earth, which doth sustain and direct us, and produceth divers fruits and colored flowers and grass.

Praised be thou, my Lord, by those who forgive for thy sake and bear sickness and sorrow. Blessed they that shall bear them in peace, for by thee, most High, shall they be crowned.

Among the followers of St. Francis we should naturally look for the composers of spontaneous religious poetry; and, in fact, we find in the Franciscan, Jacopone da Todi, the most noteworthy author of *laudi* and the head of the Umbrian school. Jacopone is an original figure: first doctor of law; then, after the sudden death of his wife, a hermit; next a Franciscan and a poet. He was interested in public affairs and violently opposed to Boniface VIII, who at last caught and imprisoned him. Escaping after the sudden death of Boniface in 1303, Jacopone died in freedom three years later. To him is ascribed by many the sublime *Stabat Mater*. One of his most touching lauds, markedly dramatic in form, deals with the Crucifixion. A messenger brings to Mary the news of the arrest of her son:

Messenger. Lady of Paradise,
Thy son is taken,
Jesus Christ the blest.
Hasten, Lady, and see
How the people smite him.
I believe he will be slain,
They have scourged him so.

Mary. How could it be
That they should have seized
Christ, my hope,
Who never committed folly?

Messenger. My Lady, he is betrayed.
Yea, Judas hath sold him;
He hath got thirty pence for him.
He hath held a great sale.

Mary. Help, Magdalen!
Fulfilment hath come upon me.
Christ, my son, is led away,
As was foretold me.

Messenger. Help, Lady, help!
They are spitting on thy son.
The people are giving him over;
They have delivered him to Pilate.

Mary. O Pilate, do not put
My son to torture;
For I can prove to thee
That he is falsely accused.

People. Crucify, crucify!
One who makes himself king,
According to our law
Disobeys the Senate.

Mary. Pray, hear me!
Think of my grief!
Perhaps you will change
The words you have spoken.

Then follows a description of the great tragedy by the messenger, broken by exclamations of grief from Mary. Presently Christ speaks from the cross:

Christ. Mother, where art thou come?
Thou dealest me a mortal hurt,
For thy weeping unmans me,
So bitter do I see it.
Mary. I weep, for I have cause,
Son, father, and spouse!
Son, who has wounded thee?
Son, who has stript thee?
Christ. Mother, why complainest thou?
I would have thee remain
And help the comrades
Whom I have won in the world.
Mary. Son, say not so!
I will die with thee,
Nor will I depart
Until my breath leave me.

. . . . . .

Christ. Mother, with sad heart
I give thee into the hands
Of John, my favorite.
Let him be called thy son.
John, behold my mother!

Take her in charity,
Have pity on her,
For her heart is pierced.

Christ dies, and the poem ends with a lamentation of the Virgin. To give a better idea of the form of the composition, a few lines are translated with the rime-scheme and meter of the original:

Mary. My son, my son, my son,
My flower, belovèd one,
My child, what shall be done
To ease my heart distrest?
O son, thou gladsome-eyed,
Why hast thou not replied?
My son, why dost thou hide
From this, thy mother's breast?

Such devout song as this, primitive and passionate, is interesting to the historical student of literature, as the main source from which the early Italian drama was to spring. To the lover of Dante it appeals for a different reason; for it is the unalloyed expression of that self-forgetful emotional piety which formed so important a part of the poet's genius. His spirit seems to be, in great measure, the product of two vast medieval movements, scholasticism and mysticism, which, contradictory as they appear, were not infrequently blended. In Dante, as in many another, the logical theologian did not exclude the rapt devotee.

CHAPTER VII

MEDIEVAL LEARNING

IN the domain of feeling, as in that of art, chronological frontiers are not impassable; but when we turn from letters to scholarship, we find a great gulf between the Middle Ages and our century. Not that the educated people of that day were less educated than our men of culture: they were, if anything, better educated; they had received careful training in more directions, their information was generally more precise. As to the masters of science, it cannot be denied that the great medieval scholars possest a more comprehensive erudition than any present-time professor. The chasm between the two periods is, however, a real one; the diversity is due, on the one hand, to the different distribution of knowledge, and, on the other hand, to the different character of it.

Nowadays, in civilized countries, almost everyone has a tincture of bookishness, and gains from moving pictures, newspapers, and cheap magazines—principally, no doubt, from gigantic head-lines and advertisements —some vague notion of an incalculable number of matters. In the olden times the masses could not read.

Whatsoever information they had came to them by word of mouth or from their own observation. They were closer observers than we are, and their memories were more retentive than ours; but they lackt the superficial breadth of mind that comes from casual inspection of many kinds of things. Book-learning was mostly confined, in the earlier medieval centuries, to clerics; and many of them had little enough of it. As time went on, it spread somewhat among the secular well-to-do; but the hand laborers remained mostly unschooled. There were no journals, no printed books, no telegraphs or telephones, no railways, no facilities whatever for the rapid diffusion of information. Every bit of lore had to be patiently dug out of an expensive manuscript, which, at the best, was less easy to decipher, even for the expert, than any decent product of the modern press. Scholarship, then, required vastly more toil, and was held in correspondingly higher esteem. The grammarian, Donatus, is placed by Dante in the sphere of the sun, with St. Dominic, St. Thomas, and the other great theologians. As for Virgil, the poet of poets and the sage of sages, for a thousand years reputed the wisest man of pagan antiquity, he whose *Æneid* was the one universal text-book and key to all learning, he who was believed to have foretold in his *Fourth Eclogue* the coming of Christ—whom else could Dante have chosen to guide him through Hell and Purgatory?

The mental and social differences between a learned and an ignorant man were more sharply markt than

they are to-day. It follows that the educated formed a small, isolated group in the community, but a dominant group. With us, it has come to be an article of faith that the concurrent judgment of the untrained, if they be sufficiently numerous, must always be right. Such an idea would have seemed, in the Middle Ages, to savor of insanity. Equally mad, no doubt, to many of our contemporaries, would these lines of Dante appear:

Even as he whose bodily eyes are blind ever judgeth good and evil by the opinion of others, so he who is bereft of the light of discretion, always in his judgment followeth report, be it true or false. Wherefore, whensoever the guide is blind, both he and that other blind man who leans on him must needs come to grief. Therefore is it written: "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Such an outcry hath long been raised against our vernacular, for reasons which shall be expanded below. Following it, the aforesaid blind men, who are wellnigh countless, with their hands on the shoulders of these liars, have fallen into the ditch of error, from which they know not how to escape. Of the use of this light of discretion the common people are especially destitute; for from the beginning of their lives being busy with some trade they are constrained so to bend their minds upon it that they think of naught else. And inasmuch as the use of virtue, either moral or intellectual, cannot be had all at once, but must be acquired by practice, and these people put their practice into some business, and care not to discern other things, it is impossible for them to have discretion. Wherefore it cometh to pass that ofttimes they shout: "Long life to their death!" or "Death to their life!" if anyone do but start them.

And this is a most perilous defect of their blindness. For this reason doth Boethius esteem popular glory of no account, because he seeth it void of discretion. Such people should be called sheep, not men. For if one sheep should throw itself from a cliff a mile high, all the others would follow after; and if one sheep for any reason doth jump, as it crosseth a road, all the rest jump likewise, even tho they see nothing to jump over. And I once saw a great many of them leap into a well, because of one which did jump in, thinking perchance to leap over a wall, altho the shepherd, weeping and shouting, with arms and breast did bar the way.

[*Banquet*, I, xi.]

The cleft between us and our medieval forebears becomes more conspicuous when we examine the nature of that which past, and that which passes, for knowledge. Dr. Johnson once remarkt that most foreigners are fools; and it is natural for all of us to look with pitying contempt upon nations whose habits are different from ours. Thus we deem generations childish that are remote from us in time or place. Thus we in turn shall be called childish by generations to come. The things people knew in those days were not identical with the things we know now, and many of the things they knew are, in our estimation, either unimportant or erroneous. "Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, falsehood on that." Who shall say whether their wisdom or ours will appear the more profitable, a thousand years hence?

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the universities were organized and became centers of intellectual cul-

ture. Before that, certain schools had won fame and had attracted students to the towns where they were situated. Bologna and Ravenna in Italy, Chartres and Paris and Orléans in France, became known betimes as seats of learning, but the earliest real universities were those of Salerno and Bologna, the first renowned for medicine, the second for law; Paris and Oxford followed. Bologna, where Dante at one time probably studied, offered good opportunities by the beginning of the twelfth century. At Oxford the first great teacher was Robert Grosseteste, who in the first half of the thirteenth century was chancellor. Both he and his pupil, Roger Bacon, were interested chiefly in science, altho they emphasized the importance of a knowledge of languages—particularly Greek and Hebrew—for use in textual criticism. Grosseteste establisht the study of Greek at Oxford. Classical studies in general reacht their height in the twelfth century, the age of John of Salisbury, a former scholar of Chartres and a defender of letters; of Alanus de Insulis, the erudite poet; of Bernard Silvestris, who wrote a commentary on the *Æneid*—all genuinely literary men. A good medieval Latin prose style, less involved and less periodic than the ancient, but with artistic qualities of its own, developt in Italy by the eleventh century, in the north by the twelfth. Latin verse, too, was successfully cultivated, some of it being accentual and rimed, altho more was built on the classic pattern. Excellent Latin poetry was composed by Hildebert, bishop of Le Mans, who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centu-

ries, and great celebrity was attained by the *Anticlaudian* of Alanus de Insulis, by the *Alexandreis* of Gautier de Lille. The thirteenth century brought changes. In the first place, it saw the advent of Dominicans and Franciscans as teachers, and much rivalry between the orders. Secondly, it saw the restoration and prompt enthronement of Aristotle, and the cultivation of logic and dialectic to the detriment of the humanities. To grammar and letters Orléans remained faithful after these subjects had fallen into neglect in Paris. For the Parisian university, however, this century was the most prosperous, as the greatest men of Europe went there to study and to lecture. Dialectic, metaphysics, theology were the principal fields; but the first, combined with law, encroacht more and more on the others. It was an age of rapid material development; science had come into vogue; and lucrative studies, such as law, medicine, composition, astrology were preferred to those which offered small pecuniary reward. In Padua and some neighboring towns, nevertheless, there was in the latter part of the thirteenth century a revival of classical studies, which were fostered by Judge Lovato and by his pupil Mussato, author of a Latin Senecan tragedy, *Eccerinis*, on the tyrant Ezzelino da Romano. In Spoleto a scholar named Vilichino turned into Latin distichs the story of Alexander the Great known as the *Historia de Prœliis*. During the fourteenth century we witness a decadence of the universities and a decline of scholasticism.

Of our bewildering masses of scientific fact and theory, very little had accumulated before the Renaissance. It was possible, in the Middle Ages, for one man to master all science. The fundamental schooling consisted, for many centuries, of the seven liberal arts of the trivium and the quadrivium: namely, Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric; Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astrology. The higher education comprised also Physics, Metaphysics, Logic, Ethics, and Theology. Physics embraced general science; Metaphysics and Theology took in all philosophy. Literature was associated with Grammar, law was often connected with Logic. Law, civil and ecclesiastical, a severely intricate subject but a financially profitable one, was assiduously cultivated by hosts of specialists. Medicine, too, was a strictly professional study. Tho based on the sound observations of the ancients, it lackt coherent background and contained a large admixture of error and superstition. For centuries the same subject-matter was uncritically workt over and over, always more and more abridged. Physicians were, however, held in high repute, both as scholars and as practitioners. Our masterful surgery and our hopeful pursuit of preventive medicine are, of course, things born but yesterday. In mathematics, the elements of arithmetic were familiar, and so were the principles of geometry; algebra, borrowed from the Arabs, was in its infancy. Nothing more. As to mechanics, the people of those times had virtually no machinery, no motor but wind and water, no means of locomotion swifter than a

clumsy sailboat or a horse, no steel construction; in stone-work, however, they could have given instruction to our builders. Some of the chief laws of physics were well understood, but chemistry had not yet emerged from the futile practice of alchemy.

This last study, which has been dropt from our curricula, was a science in itself—merely an experimental one, to be sure—and a very dangerous one for body and soul. Alchemists, with their transmutations of metals, were often regarded as disturbers of God's order, fit for burning in this world and the next; Dante, however, seems to have lookt upon them simply as humbugs. Their business required much erudition and not a little skill; and from their laboratories arose the most wonderful of modern sciences. Now that we have recalled one forgotten branch of learning, we may as well bring to mind one or two others. It is only fair, when enumerating our recent acquisitions, to mention some of our losses, even tho they be not of a nature to distress us. In addition to alchemy, the people of old had magic and astrology.

The former was of two kinds, white and black. White magic, which involved no commerce with evil spirits, was innocent in itself, tho perilous and often put to bad use. Black magic, whose efficacy depended on demonic aid, was wholly damnable. Both varieties abounded in difficult formulæ. A scientific magician must needs be a very learned man. *Per contra*, any learned man was open to the suspicion of being a sorcerer. Virgil, in his

own country, was reputed, all through the Middle Ages, to have been a great enchanter, and many curious tales were told of his spells; Naples remembers him as a conjurer even now. A document found not long since in the Vatican gives an account of the trial, in Avignon, of two of the Visconti for an attempt on the life of John XXII. Matteo Visconti, wishing to remove a Pope who favored his enemy, conceived the idea of having a silver statuette of the prelate bewitcht by an expert named Canolati. On the refusal of the specialist, Galeazzo Visconti attempted to make him change his mind, and, among other inducements, told him that he had in reserve as an assistant "Master Dante Aligero of Florence," whom he had invited to Piacenza without telling him what the business was. This was in 1320.

Astrology, which required a thoro knowledge of astronomy as a basis, was an art complicated and difficult in the extreme. By examining the stars in a certain part of the sky, and their relation to certain other stars, at the time of an infant's birth, one could tell what the disposition of the child was to be. Such a use of our acquaintance with the forces of nature was accounted both sound and lawful. It was only the misuse of astrology for divination of future events—the attempt to fathom God's secrets writ in the heavens—that was illegitimate, wicked, and, according to the highest medieval standards, unscientific, altho scientific men were frequently unable to resist its fascination. The correctness of horoscopes was a logical inference from the potency ascribed to the

stars. This stellar influence constitutes the power called Nature, whose incessant operation shapes all earthly activities and all material forms, from a pebble or a mountain to a human brain. God himself created matter, and from it built the heavens; he created the angels and Adam and Eve; and he creates a soul for every child that is born. The rest he leaves to Nature, which rules over fire, air, water, and earth, governs plants and beasts, and holds sway over the bodies and dispositions of men. At the very beginning, Nature distinguisht the four elements and arranged them in the order of their lightness and their nobility, fire at the top, earth at the bottom. When God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear," it was an especially strong stellar attraction over a part of the globe that caused the land to rise, in that spot, above the lighter element. Now the stars themselves are but the instruments of the angels, who direct their movements; and the angels are ministers of God, whom they uninterruptedly contemplate, and whose will they intuitively apprehend. These are, of course, the virtuous angels, the ones who did not, immediately after their creation, join Lucifer in his arrogant revolt. The rebels were at once cast into Hell, where they became hideous demons, guardians and tormentors of the damned. The good remain in eternal enjoyment of God's presence, executors of his plan, messengers to deserving souls on earth and in Heaven. Astrology is the study of the physical means

used by the blessed angels in the formation of a human character.

If the Middle Ages are very remote from us in scientific achievement, they compare not so unfavorably with us in the fine arts. Knowledge of music was general among people of education. Simple as the art then was, it demanded a good technical grounding. Architecture rose to heights never equalled before nor after. Sculpture, considered purely as an architectural adornment, reacht a degree of effectiveness scarcely surpast even by the Greeks. Mosaic decoration, imported from the East, attained its richest development early in our period. Painting counted for little until the end of the thirteenth century, when, in Italy, Cimabue, followed by Giotto and his school, lifted it out of Byzantine conventionality and launcht it on a new and glorious career. Of the art of ancient Greece nothing was known, and very little of the artistic glory of Rome. Some edifices, to be sure, were then in a better state of preservation than now—the Coliseum, for example; but most of the old buildings were hidden by the more recent constructions clustered over or about them. Statues and reliefs lay buried or walled in. The habit of using all available masonry for the erection of fortifications had concealed or defaced nearly all the beauties of the past. The new art of the Middle Ages, then, was for the most part really new, not an imitation of classic models, and only remotely and partially an outgrowth of ancient practices.

What did the men of the Middle Ages know of the

physical universe in which we live? Without the aid of telescopes, they were astonishingly strong in astronomy, having a very accurate acquaintance with the movements and relative positions of the heavenly bodies. Nevertheless, firm believers in the principle of immutability, they regarded the earth as the motionless center of the universe, whereas our restless spirit has given the sun the middle place in our group and prefers to think of our globe as always moving. Astronomical problems can be workt out on either basis; in fact, the observed data, as far as they were then known, are more easily accounted for by the old-fashioned, or Ptolemaic, system. Mathematically speaking, the ancient astronomers made their great mistake, not in placing the earth at the center of things, but in assuming that all celestial orbits are circular. This they did on purely theoretical grounds. They argued as follows: God, who is perfect in goodness, wisdom, and power, made the universe; therefore the universe, as he planned it, must be perfect; the circle is the one perfect figure, because it has neither beginning nor end, and because all parts of its circumference are equally distant from the center; *ergo*, all heavenly bodies move in circles, or in combinations of circles. This last modification became necessary before science had advanced far, no very accurate observation being needed to reveal the fact that a simple rotation would not carry the planets into the various positions they occupy. Complex orbits were desired to meet the conditions, and the complexity kept growing with increas-

ingly minute knowledge of the facts. The whole physical universe is spherical, like the earth; it is made up of a series of hollow, transparent spheres, one lying within another, like the skins of an onion; and the earth is its core. Now each of these shell-like spheres, or heavens,—except the two outermost,—contains one solid, visible heavenly body. The very last one has none, and is therefore, entirely transparent in every part. The next-to-last, on the contrary, contains bodies almost too numerous to count (namely, all the fixt stars), besides the mysterious Milky Way, which keeps its secret even yet. Imagine nine soap-bubbles, one inside the other, all but the outside one fleckt with bright points, and a dark speck in the middle of all. This is the world of matter. Now all of these spheres revolve together around the earth from east to west once in twenty-four hours, carrying their stars with them. But in addition to this common motion, each heaven has an independent circuit of its own, in a different direction, and at a different rate. The sphere of the moon backs around once a month; that of the sun completes its slanting course in a year; the heaven of the fixt stars covers only one degree in a hundred years, producing the phenomenon known as the precession of the equinoxes. Even this duplication of revolutions does not explain the varying distances of the planets from the earth. According to one theory, the orbits of these shifting bodies, tho circular, have not the center of the earth as their center: in other words, they are "eccentric." Another and, in

the course of time, more prevalent theory accounts for the troublesome variations with the help of epicycles. An epicycle is a small circle whose center is on the circumference of a larger one. Thus each star-bearing sphere, except those of the sun and the fixt stars, contains a comparatively small transparent sphere, which revolves with it around the earth, but at the same time turns independently on its own center; and on the circumference of this globe is the heavenly body. In this fashion the planet swings outside or inside the general line of revolution of the big sphere, to an extent equal to the radius of the little one; and its total variation in distance from the earth is equal to the diameter of the epicycle. The maximum distance of one planet, moreover, is equal to the minimum distance of the next.

Dante in his *Convivio* gives us a curious picture of the celestial phenomena as they would appear if they could be observed from the northern and southern extremities of the earth. First he cites certain theories of Pythagoras and Plato, which, he says, were refuted by Aristotle.

> These opinions are shown to be false, in the second book of *De Cælo et Mundo*, by that glorious Philosopher to whom Nature most revealed her secrets; and it is there proven by him that this world—to wit, the earth—doth abide stable in itself and fixt forever. And the reasons which Aristotle giveth to confute those men and to demonstrate the truth, it is not my purpose to repeat here; for it is quite enough for those to whom I speak to learn, on his great authority, that this earth is

fixt and turneth not, and that it with the ocean is the center of the heaven. This heaven revolveth about this center ceaselessly, as we see; in which revolution there must needs be two still Poles, and one Circle of vast circumference equally distant from both. Of these two Poles, one is visible to almost all the uncovered earth—that is, this northern Pole; the other from almost all the uncovered earth is hid—to wit, the southern one. The Circle which is conceived betwixt these is that part of the heaven beneath which the sun doth revolve when it goeth with the Ram or the Scales. Wherefore ye shall know that if a stone could fall from this Pole of ours, it would fall outside in the great Ocean, just upon that back of the sea where, if there were a man, the North Star would always be over the middle of his head. And I believe that from Rome to this spot, going straight to the north, there is a distance of about two thousand seven hundred miles, or little more or less. Let us then, to see the thing more clearly, imagine that in the place whereof I spake there is a city which hath the name of *Maria.* Furthermore, I declare that if from the other, or southern, Pole, a stone should drop, it would fall upon that back of the great Ocean which on our globe is exactly opposite to *Maria.* And I believe that from Rome to the place where this second stone would drop, going due south, is a distance of seven thousand five hundred miles, or not far from that. And here let us imagine another city which shall have the name of *Lucia;* and it shall be distant from *Maria* ten thousand two hundred miles, on whichsoever side one draws the line. Thus between the one and the other city lieth half the circumference of this globe; wherefore do the citizens of *Maria* turn the soles of their feet against the soles of the dwellers in *Lucia.* Let us imagine also on this globe a Circle, which in its every

part shall be as far from *Maria* as from *Lucia*. I believe that this Circle (as I gather from the teachings of the astrologers and from that of Albert of Germany in his book *De Natura Locorum* and *De Proprietatibus Elementorum*, and also from the testimony of Lucan in his ninth book) would divide this land which is not covered by the great Ocean, yonder to the south, almost along the whole edge of the first zone, where, among other nations, are the Garamantes, who almost always go naked, and to whom Cato came with the Roman people, escaping from the tyranny of Cæsar. These three places being once markt upon our globe, we can easily see how the sun encircleth the same. I tell you, then, that the heaven of the sun revolveth from west to east, not directly contrary to the daily motion, which is that of day and night, but obliquely contrary thereto. Wherefore its mid Circle, which lieth likewise betwixt two Poles of its own, and in which is the body of the sun, doth cut at two opposite points the Circle of the first two Poles—to wit, at the beginning of Aries and at the beginning of Libra; and it swerveth therefrom in two curves, one to the north and another to the south. And the extremities of these curves are equally distant from the first Circle, on one side and the other, twenty-three degrees and one point; and one extremity is the beginning of Cancer and the other is the beginning of Capricorn. Wherefore, at the beginning of Aries, when the sun crosseth the mid Circle of the first Poles, *Maria* must needs behold this sun encircle the world round about the earth, or else the sea, after the fashion of a millstone, only half of whose body is seen. And she shall then see the sun rise higher and higher like the screw of a press, until it shall have completed its ninety-first turn and something more. When these turns are complete, its rising at *Maria* shall be

about as high as it riseth for us an hour and a half after dawn in the season of equal days and nights. And if a man were standing in *Maria*, and kept his face turned to the sun, he would see the same proceeding to his right. Afterwards, by the same course, it seemeth to go down another ninety-one turns and a little more, until it circleth about on the ground, or on the sea, showing not the whole of itself; and then it disappeareth, and *Lucia* beginneth to see it. And the rising and descending of the same doth *Lucia* now behold, with as many turns as *Maria*. And if a man were standing in *Lucia*, if but he should keep his face turned to the sun, he would see it moving to his left. From all of which we may see that these places have an annual day of six months and a night of the same duration; and when the one hath day, the other hath night.

This marvelously accurate description of movements never until these latest years seen by mortal eye, is followed by an equally correct representation of the sun's course as watcht from the equator, where it does not seem to creep around the horizon, like a millstone, but cuts through the middle of the sky, like a wheel. The whole arrangement of the world is such that every part of the earth, in the course of the year, has as much light as darkness. "O unspeakable Wisdom that didst so ordain, how poor is our intelligence to comprehend thee! And ye for whose good and pleasure I write, in what blindness do ye live, never lifting your eyes up to these things, but keeping them fixt on the mire of your folly!"

CHAPTER VIII

THEOLOGY

WHY did God create this marvelous universe of ours? What was his purpose in materializing the world which from all eternity had existed in his thought? Not to increase his own happiness; for that was perfect. Not to break the monotony of his lonely existence; for all things, all men, all times, all events have ever been and always will be alive in his consciousness. Past, present, future are alike to him; all time is present. He is like the center of a circle of which the circumference is eternity; at every moment he is exactly opposite every point of the endless ring. Love alone—overflowing love—was the impulse that moved the Father to give independent existence to creatures made expressly to share his joy.

> God's goodness, which no kind of envy knows,
> Glowing within itself and sparkling forth,
> Its everlasting beauties doth disclose.
>
> [*Paradise*, VII.]

Or, as Boethius had put it, long before Dante:

Thou inmost essence of the highest good,
Devoid of envy, no external cause
Drove thee to shape the floating matter's form.
[*On the Consolation of Philosophy*, III, Poem ix.]

Power, Wisdom, and Love all shared in the great deed. Power, guided by Wisdom, wrought with Love, and produced the world of mind and of matter. These three attributes of the Godhead are identified respectively with the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God the Father is Power. Christ, the Word, the Son of God, embodies Wisdom. Love, the Holy Ghost, proceeds equally from Father and Son.

That primal Power, beyond the scope of speech,
Gazing with Love on Wisdom's filial face
(That Love which breathes eternally from each),
Created all that moves thro' mind or space
With such a plan that he who ponders it,
Of its Creator must perceive a trace.
[*Paradise*, X.]

If perfect Power, perfect Wisdom, perfect Love united in shaping the universe, why is there imperfection anywhere? For there is such a thing as imperfection; else were sin impossible. To say that the world, to be perfect, must contain all that is possible, and therefore all possible degrees of good and evil, may stop the mouth of the questioner, but cannot appease his mind. Christian philosophy affords no satisfactory solution of the problem. According to Plato, spirit, which is good, is obliged

to operate with matter, which in itself contains no goodness. Imperfection lurks, then, in the clay the Potter has to use. This doctrine, which seems to offer an explanation of the difficulty, was current in the early centuries of Christianity. God and matter were regarded as co-eternal; and out of matter not made by himself the Creator made the world. But this theory, which restricts intolerably the absolutism of the Lord, was condemned by the Church. Out of a similarly dualistic conception of the universe arose the Manichæan heresy, rife for many centuries, which considered the world as a battle-ground of good and evil powers matcht against each other. The orthodox Dante is here constrained to argue inconclusively. Man is faulty because the stars are imperfect; and they are imperfect because they are made of matter, which, being base, cannot completely realize the divine purpose. But inasmuch as matter was created by God, and every direct product of God's energy is perfect, the contradiction still remains.

The presence of sin is explained thus. The Almighty's object in creating was to bring into independent existence other beings which should share his happiness. But there can be no independent life, and no individual happiness, without freedom of the will; and this freedom means liberty of choice between good and evil. Man comes into the world with a natural inclination to good. But circumstances, combined with his own inexperience, may make evil seem good to him. Sin, then, is the

choice of an apparent good that is really bad. But if sin be continued, a vicious habit is formed, and the will loses its freedom. We are responsible for our deeds, because we possess innate discrimination, or conscience, which is an adequate guide, if we carefully listen to its counsel. We are not to blame for being attracted by a forbidden pleasure; but we are blameworthy if we yield to that attraction. The sinful act is the consent of the will. All our countless misdemeanors are traceable to seven fundamental tendencies, or capital vices: pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, lust. Pride, indeed, is the basis of all wrongdoing; for consciously to do wrong is to set one's self above God's law. Adam's disobedience was an act of pride, a refusal to submit. And by his transgression he deprived all his descendants of God's grace, without which it is impossible to win salvation. Only through the atonement of Christ, who took upon himself the whole burden of original sin and expiated it on the cross, was grace restored and salvation again made possible. Immediately after his death, the Saviour descended into the outer Hell, or Limbus, and set free the souls of virtuous members of the Old Church. This invasion is called the Harrowing of Hell. Since then the entrance has remained open. "For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder" [*Ps.* cvii, 16].

Another problem that appears to lie just outside the reach of ordinary man's understanding is the compatibility of human liberty with predestination. God knows

everything in advance; he gives to every creature a disposition and an environment that lead inevitably to certain results: yet man is at every juncture free to choose and responsible for his choice. Dante scarcely attempts to reconcile the seemingly contradictory terms. He does, in one passage, compare our Father's foreknowledge to the eye of an observer on shore watching a boat on the water. The onlooker may see exactly what is to be the fate of the skiff, but his foresight does not in any way affect the conduct of the boatman nor his freedom of action. The parallel is, however, imperfect; for the observer in question has not made the water, the craft, and the skipper. We must accept on faith the doctrine of free will—the wholesome doctrine of individual responsibility. God, as he creates the soul of the nascent babe, confers upon it, in accordance with his unfathomable purpose, a certain measure of his grace. Why he gives more to this one, less to that, not even the wisest of angels can tell. "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" [*Rom.* ix, 20, 21]. In the amphitheater of Dante's Paradise, both on the Christian and on the Hebrew side, all the tiers of seats in the lower half are occupied by the souls of infants who, altho they died too young to exercise their free will, are enjoying different degrees of blessedness in Heaven, according to the measure of grace originally bestowed on each.

Below the tier that midway doth divide
Both sections, not for personal desert
But thro' another's merit souls reside
To whom such dues may rightfully revert.
For these are spirits, all of them, set free
Or e'er free will they truly could exert.
Their faces soon will make it clear to thee,
And eke their voices babylike and shrill,
If thou attentively shalt hear and see.

[*Paradise*, XXXII.]

Now the gift of grace is the bestowal of spiritual vision, the power to see God—intellectually in this life, intuitively in the next. He who is best endowed with grace has the clearest understanding of good and evil. On earth, his capacity for goodness is greater than that of other men. If he misuses his gift and misses salvation, his guilt is heaviest, his punishment most severe. If, on the other hand, he wins Paradise, he is nearest to his Maker, the source of all knowledge. Angels and blessed souls dwell in perpetual contemplation of the Lord, and see all things in him. In him is the real universe, of which our physical world is but a shadow; and the inhabitants of Heaven never avert their gaze from the only reality, the mind of God. The clearer their sight, the more intense their love of their Creator and of all that is akin to him; and the keener their love, the brighter their joy. No two spirits, human or angelic, see God exactly in the same fashion. Hence love and joy are infinitely varied, and Paradise becomes a vast

symphony of happiness. Every soul and every angel, however, enjoys the divine presence to the utmost extent of its capacity, and feels all the love and delight of which it is capable. Envy is impossible. Rather does every spirit rejoice in the exact proportion of its reward to its fitness, and in the countless kinds of intelligence that diversify the blessed host. "In my Father's house are many mansions."

Predestination operates not only directly, in the award of grace, but also indirectly, in the molding of the brain by the stars at birth. Were it not for Nature, children in their mental and moral disposition would be like their parents. Such a transmission of attributes is modified by stellar power. Some children are stampt by Mars with bellicose ardor, some are infused with amatory proclivities by Venus, some receive (as did Dante himself) from the constellation of the Twins a taste for literature. These mental characteristics may incline them to good or to evil. Their gift of grace enables them to pursue the one and to avoid the other. While some are more enlightened than their fellows, every Christian has light enough to lead him to salvation, if he will but follow it. Righteousness is harder for one than for another, but it is possible for all. And when Heaven is won, the soul retains the qualities imparted by Nature, which shape and color its blessedness. While the attainment of salvation depends on the individual, on the proper use of his freedom of will, the degree and kind of blessedness ultimately within his reach are in

no wise subject to his control, being determined by predestination.

In Hell, as in Heaven, the eternal state of the soul depends on qualities imprest upon it by Nature. We are all subject to sin, and we all—or nearly all—do sin in one way or another, according to our inherent proclivities. If, by exercise of the will, we repent and try to cast off evil, God forgives us our straying away from him, and we are admitted, after death, to Purgatory, where by penance we atone for our temporary preference of wickedness and so cleanse our souls of wrongful inclination that error shall henceforth be impossible. Then at last we are pure in heart, fit to see God; then we come into the inheritance of our eternal kingdom. On the question whether all the elect have to pass through Purgatory on their way to Paradise, theologians differed; Dante, so far as we can judge, believed that only Christ and his blessed Mother were sufficiently spotless to rise directly Heavenward. He maintained also that no spirits entered Purgatory before the Redemption—a reasonable opinion, tho not universally accepted. Our sojourn in Purgatory is proportionate to our need of discipline, and therefore in inverse proportion to the penance we do on earth. It may be shortened by the prayers of those we leave behind, if these friends be themselves in a state of grace. To put it differently, a fixt sacrifice of love is required, and this offering may be made up, in part, of contributions from others. The torments of Purgatory, unlike those of Hell, have a

reformatory purpose. They are seven in number, corresponding to the seven capital vices responsible for all our sins. We must all be punisht for pride, because, as has been said, pride is at the bottom of every sin; whether we suffer also for envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and lust depends on the kind of life we have led, and this depends in turn—barring the prohibitive power of the will—on the influence of the stars. The sin of sloth, or *acedia*, tho strange to the modern world, was as familiar as any in the Middle Ages. It consisted in spiritual sluggishness, a lukewarmness in the love of God and his works. Its manifestations would nowadays generally be regarded as symptoms of a physical disease, such as melancholia or neurasthenia. The advance of both medical and social science has progressively restricted, in modern opinion, the scope of individual responsibility. Every evil-doer, in our day, may regard himself, and be regarded by specialists, not as a sinner, but as a victim of heredity or society; and he will be encouraged in this unfruitful diagnosis by philanthropists whose kind intentions scarcely atone for their sentimental immorality.

It was different in olden times. Then every human being had to answer for his own deeds. Every man was separately responsible to his Maker. Whosoever persistently and obstinately refused his Father's grace, putting to wrongful use his God-given liberty, and died without one regret for his ingratitude, thereby definitively forfeited that grace and deprived himself forever of the

sight of him whom he had rejected. The fundamental common element of all the penalties of Hell is intellectual darkness—the absence of God, the source of light. In this punishment they also share whose guilt is only negative: the unbaptized children and the virtuous heathen. The positively wicked endure other tribulations as well, inconceivably horrible tortures, without a glimmer of hope for relief in all eternity. Love, hope, knowledge have forsaken them; everlasting hatred, despair, ignorance, and pain alone abide. With regard to the torments, the question was raised whether they are to be taken literally or metaphorically: that is, for instance, whether we are to understand the infernal fire as real flame or as the burning of conscience. St. Thomas was constrained to decide for the literal interpretation, tho well aware that it seems anomalous for disembodied spirits to feel physical anguish. How this can be, he says, is a mystery beyond our comprehension. On the Judgment Day, when the souls shall have recovered their bodies, the suffering shall become more intense. Then Hell shall be sealed up, containing in its accursed pouch all the evil of the world; and the rest of the universe, pure and serene, shall pursue its life of eternal joy, undisturbed by concern for the damned. Their agony shall come to its consciousness only as an illustration of divine justice. Eternal pain and eternal bliss are the alternatives from which the Christian freely chooses. As long as he dwells on earth, no help, no loving guidance, is withheld from him. His absolute denial of af-

fection for his Maker proves that by misuse of freedom he has become irrevocably bad, fit only for the refuse-heap. Hell, as well as Heaven, is a logical consequence of immortality and free will. The doctrine of everlasting punishment, which seems to the modern mind so intolerably cruel, had a wholesomely deterrent effect on human passion, and imposed on the Christian world more self-restraint than a Hell-less religion could have inculcated. As belief in the eternal fire dies away, some other terror must needs arise to hold man's greed in check. We have not yet reacht a stage where satisfaction in well-doing, or even desire of recompense hereafter, can suffice to keep us on the strait path. Now, as then, human law and apprehension of human wrath are powerful checks for the poor. For the rich, dread of disease, forebodings of degeneration, tho still inadequate, are ever growing in efficiency. With great property-owners, fear of anarchy, with loss of all they hold dearest, leads first to politic benefaction, then, through the hitherto unsuspected joy of giving, to really disinterested philanthropy. To-day as of yore, fright, ignoble in itself, becomes a source of good. Terror of Hell once founded churches and convents; terror of socialism now lays the corner-stone of hospitals, libraries, and schools.

The only creature still exercising free will is man. The elements, plants, stones, beasts can do no wrong, because they have no choice. They are endowed with an instinct which tells them what to do. This instinct corresponds, in a way, to man's innate ideas and uncon-

scious inclinations; but these are under man's control, whereas the instinct of the rest of creation is both unerring and irresistible. Love is the motive power of all the universe; it is love that impels everything to be what it is. Even the wicked are moved by love, but their love is love of evil. In inanimate and irrational creatures, love cannot be diverted from God. The flame expresses its love by straining upward; the stone, by being hard; the grass, by its greenness; the beasts, by following the instincts their Maker gave them. They cannot act otherwise. Man alone is free to do wrong. The angels, also, were created free; but they made their choice immediately and once for all. As soon as they came into existence, they were offered grace. Most of them accepted it, and that meritorious acceptance won them an eternal recompense. Some (about a tenth part, Dante conjectures) refused, thinking, in their pride, to do without the Lord. They were lost forever. Had they received the proffered grace, it would have been impossible for them to sin thereafter. Grace, as we have seen, means, for a bodiless spirit, intuition of God; and angels, with their full capacity of vision, gazing directly upon the Lord, seeing all his love, his wisdom, his might, can have no will but his. Ever since their acceptance of grace, the good angels have merged their identity in the mind of their Creator. They are the countless instruments of his purpose, the means by which his all-embracing but undiversified energy is differentiated to suit the infinite needs of earth and heaven. No

faculty of theirs is ever idle for an instant; their being is pure activity.

When the world was fashioned, three factors sprang into existence simultaneously: crude matter, the skies with their stars, and the angels. St. Jerome imagined that the angelic tribe had been created ages before the material universe; but, as Dante points out, it is absurd to contend that spirits whose essence is absolute activity should have existed before there was anything to do. Immediately after their creation (before one could count twenty, Dante says) their choice of right or wrong was made. The sinful ones plunged down into the mass of brute matter, which thereupon began to shape itself into a Hell-containing globe. The stars completed the separation of the elements and the modeling of the earth. To make good the loss in the angelic host, God then created man, for whose benefit, indeed, the material universe was constructed; and the stellar power produced minerals, plants, animals, for man's use. Now that we no longer (in theory) regard the earth as the center of the universe, we are apt (also in theory) to doubt the all-importance of man. We dream of other planets inhabited by other beings; of countless other suns, each with its family of satellites, and each of these satellites affording an abode for living things. We are even inclined to guess that on other globes, older than our own, rational creatures may have reacht a far higher development than ours. We conceive of man as having gradually workt his way up, through stages represented

in part by existent beasts, from a protoplasmal cell. Every animal, everything alive may be engaged on a similar upward journey. This thought gives to each creature a dignity of its own, an importance independent of its relation to mankind. No such fancies disturbed the medieval mind. Man alone was the center. The earth, with all it bears, was made for his abode; the air and fire, for his sustenance; the skies, to fashion him and his surroundings.

CHAPTER IX

MAN AND HIS WORLD

WHAT did the Middle Ages know of this one and only earth, the center of the universe, the home of God's favored creature—man? It must be confest that man himself, in his physical, mental, and moral structure, was much better described than was his habitation. Altho the circulation of the blood was not yet understood, and the function of nerves was largely usurpt by certain fine vapors, or "spirits," which shot to and fro in the body, the anatomical science of the time was not at all to be despised. Metaphysics and ethics had reacht a stage which compares not unfavorably with their present condition. But geography lagged sadly behind. With the means of locomotion then available, such a state of things was inevitable, for the data simply could not be had. The medieval intelligence, in general, dealt ably with accessible facts, but its means of collecting materials were few and small. Our superiority lies in the command of more and better instruments.

As for geography, each nation knew accurately only its own territory and environment and its trade routes.

The rest was a blur. Scholars did, to be sure, call the earth round, as did many ancient Romans and Greeks before them, and they happened to be not so very far out of the way concerning its total dimensions; but, having never heard of America, they covered three-quarters of our sphere with unbroken water, gathering all the land together, on one quarter, in the cloverlike half-moon continent of Europe, Asia, Africa. Asia was considerably reduced, and Africa was cut off short near the middle. This world-continent stretcht east and west 180°, or 10,200 miles, half the circumference of the globe; from north to south, about 2,500 miles, from the neighborhood of the arctic circle to the southern tropic or beyond. Some authorities affirmed that Asia was as big as Europe and Africa together, on the ground that Shem, to whom that country was assigned, was the oldest son; but there were other views. Tho the Mediterranean was carefully mapt out in detail, the length of that sea was curiously exaggerated, for it was thought to extend over a quadrant, or 90°, of the earth's surface. The belt of habitable land, which did not quite reach to the northern or the southern shore of the whole continent, was divided into seven zones, or "climates." It was so situated as to lie under the influence of the constellations of the zodiac, which the sun traverses during its annual course. Within the range of the zodiac are included also the revolutions of the moon and the five visible planets. At the eastern extremity of the continent is the mouth of the Ganges; at its western end, the

Strait of Gibraltar. Midway between is Jerusalem, the sacred city, as stated in Ezekiel v, 5: "Thus saith the Lord God, this is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her." There, in 1102, was pointed out the navel of the earth—which, to be sure, was located by other observers in other times at Delphi and at Mecca. Half-way between Jerusalem and Gibraltar, in the middle of the western world, was Rome, seat of the Papacy and the Empire.

If ancient geography had no America, the modern atlas has lost a region which some may deem of almost equal importance, the Garden of Eden. This country was, in medieval belief, as real as any other; but, in spite of several successful expeditions to it, opinions differed as to its locality, altho it was generally associated with the east. Sometimes it was percht on a high mountain, sometimes it lay on a remote island; always it was difficult to reach. The isle of Ceylon offered it good housing, being distant, mountainous, mysterious, and rarely seen. The Venerable Bede and Peter Lombard would have it on a peak so high as not only to escape the flood, but even to touch the sphere of the moon. In any case, it was surrounded by a wall of fire. Dante, for reasons of his own, put it at the top of a mountain on an island in the midst of the great ocean, at the antipodes of Jerusalem, the place of original sin being thus directly opposite the place of atonement. Had there been no transgression, there would have been no death, and man in the flesh would have lived in the Garden of Eden until the Judg-

ment Day, when all of us would have been taken up to Heaven. Sin, however, entailed death, which means temporary separation of soul and body; for both are really immortal. At the Last Trump all the souls shall come swarming back from Heaven and Hell, shall recover their bodies, and shall gather in the Valley of Jehoshaphat to listen to their eternal sentence. When body and soul shall be reunited, both the bliss of the saved and the pain of the damned shall be more perfectly felt; for man is not complete, and can neither enjoy nor suffer to his utmost capacity, unless he has both flesh and spirit. No ghost in Hell shall receive before the end of the world its material part; and no soul in Heaven is now clothed in the flesh, except Christ and Mary, who at the Ascension and the Assumption rose to their home without discarding the body. There were, however, not a few good people who believed that the beloved disciple was likewise taken up bodily into Heaven. Their mistake arose from John xxi, 22–23:

> Jesus saith unto him [Peter], If I will that he [John] tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee.

According to another legend, St. John is sleeping in Ephesus until the Day of Judgment. Dante, on seeing the soul of the disciple appear, as a brilliant light, in the sphere of the fixt stars, is naturally curious to know

whether there is any truth in the report of his assumption. Consequently he stares so intently into the brightness that he temporarily loses his sight.

As one who, gazing hard with all his might
To see the sun eclipst a little bit,
Is rendered sightless by excessive sight,
So, turning toward the flame, I stared at it;
And heard these words: "Why dost thou daze thine eyes
To see a thing which here would be unfit?
On earth my flesh is earth, and there it lies
And shall lie with the rest, until our tale
With God's eternal plan shall harmonize."

[*Paradise*, XXV.]

Of the Earthly Paradise, according to accepted belief, the only present inhabitants are Enoch and Elijah, who were caught up alive and are awaiting the Last Day in a state of happiness suited to their perfection. They appear to their rare visitors as two venerable elders. Dante, who wisht to make his Eden a symbol of innocence, of the condition of man before the fall (a state which we may regain by penance), banisht from it all that could mar the impression of youthfulness, and substituted for Enoch and Elijah the lovely girlish figure of Matilda, keeper of the garden. Trees, flowers, of supernatural beauty, birds and brooks forever melodious form her appropriate setting; but they are also the background of the two patriarchs of tradition, being constant features of the legend. The streams, in fact, flow straight from Gen. ii, 10: "And a river went out of

Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads." One of these is called Euphrates, the other three are identified with the Ganges, Nile, and Tigris. A symbolic use is made by Dante of these waters. He has two brooks issuing, in opposite directions, from an inexhaustible spring in the middle of the garden. They are called Lethe and Eunoë. The first has a function suggested by its classic name, for it bestows forgetfulness of sin; and the other revives memory of all one's good works. Together they stand for absolution. This rite is administered by Matilda, type of Innocence, who first plunges the swooning poet into Lethe, then leads him forth to join the dance of the four Cardinal Virtues.

And when my heart had waked my sense at last,
That solitary maid above me bent
I now beheld. "Cling fast," she cried, "cling fast!"
Neck-deep within the stream she had me pent,
And, drawing me behind her, seemed to soar,
And shuttle-swift across the water went.
As I approacht the beatific shore,
"Purge me!" I heard so exquisitely said,
I cannot write nor eke recall it more.
The beauteous maid her arms forthwith outspread;
She held my head, and, pushing, made me taste
The water, which my palate moistenèd;
Then drew me forth. And soon she had me placed,
All dripping, in the lovely Virtues' dance,
Each one of whom had quickly claspt my waist.

[*Purgatory*, XXXI.]

A little later, at the behest of Beatrice, she takes Dante (and also the poet Statius, who is with him) to drink of the waters of Eunoë.

A courteous soul denieth no request,
But shapes its own upon another's will,
If but that will be outwardly exprest;
So that sweet lady fared, and led me still,
And said to Statius with a girlish grace
Ere we were gone: "Come with him to the rill."
If, reader, I to write had longer space
I surely should describe, at least in part,
That draught so sweet it ne'er could thirst efface;
But since the leaves are full which, at the start,
I destined to compose this second book,
My run is halted by the rein of art.
I came refresht from that most holy brook,
Restored anew—as freshened plantlets are
Renewed in verdure, with a new-born look—
All pure and fit to climb from star to star.

[*Purgatory*, XXXIII.]

Among the strange plants that adorn the garden stands the Tree of Knowledge. After Adam's sin, however, this tree withered; but, according to one story, it shall put forth leaves again when justice shall be restored, at the end of the world. Another legend tells how Seth found his way back to the lost paradise, and took from the dried tree some seeds, which, being planted, produced another tree, the one that afterwards furnisht material for the cross: thus sin and atonement sprang

from the same wood. Dante appropriately makes the tree a symbol of Law. Later visitors than Seth have seen the garden. In the sixth century the bold Irish monk, St. Brendan, or Brandan, sailed out into the Atlantic with a few companions, and after marvelous adventures discovered the Isle of the Blest, a land which fuses the Christian Eden with the old Celtic Otherworld. His Isle figured in geography long after Columbus, and his *Navigation* stimulated many subsequent voyagers.

Others reacht the Earthly Paradise by land. One such journey is narrated by an old legend which, in its fourteenth century Italian form, is printed by D'Ancona and Bacci in the first volume of their *Manuale della letteratura italiana*:

> The Garden of Delight lieth on earth in this world in the regions of the East, upon a mountain exceeding high beyond all other mountains and above all the earthly world; from which Garden do flow four rivers which surround all the world, and their names are Tigris, Euphrates, Gehon, and Phison. And beside one of these rivers, which is called Gehon, was a monastery of monks, great friends of God, who led a life truly angelic. Now it came to pass that once, as three monks of this monastery were walking through the garden of this monastery, they came to the bank of Gehon, and did wash their hands and feet. So doing, they saw coming down the aforesaid river a branch of a tree, of many various and beautiful colors.

This branch had leaves of gold, silver, blue, and green, and fruit of wondrous sweetness. Thinking that the

spot where such trees grew must be the abode of God and the angels, the pious men set forth to find it, following up the stream. Forgetting, in their excitement, to notify their abbot, they marcht on and on through woods of surpassing loveliness. On the grass they found manna, which proved to be the most delicious food in the world. So happy were they that their feet scarce seemed to touch the ground. At last, after scaling a mountain a hundred miles high, they reacht the gate of Eden, which was guarded by an angel with a flaming sword. Rapt in admiration of his beauty, the monks sat looking at him for five days and five nights, with no thought of this world or the other.

The face of this angel was like unto the light of the sun. The angel spake unto them, saying: "What will ye?" The monks answered: "We would fain come there within, if it be your pleasure, and abide three days or four." And the gate forthwith was opened, and those holy monks entered in. And no sooner were they within than they heard the sound of the wheel of heaven revolving, which sound was of such sweetness and softness and delight that they scarce knew where they were, but seated themselves within the gate.

There two venerable patriarchs, Enoch and Elijah, came toward them and offered to guide them through the garden. They beheld the Fountain of Youth, the Tree of Knowledge, the Tree of Life (from which was taken the wood of the cross), the Tree of Immortality, the Four Springs, and a lake full of singing fishes. Wondrous trees and birds were about them; the air was

full of celestial melody. When the elders finally told them that it was time to depart, the monks threw themselves on their knees, and begged to be allowed to stay a fortnight. "We have not yet been here a week," they cried. And the holy patriarchs answered: "Ye have dwelt here seven hundred years." Returning to their country, they found their old monastery full of strange faces. At first their story was not believed; but they establisht their identity by bidding the brethren look in the high altar for an old missal, wherein were recorded their names and the hour, month, and year of their departure. Thereupon they were held in great reverence, and after forty days they died.

With such a narrative as this it is interesting to compare Dante's account of his entrance into Eden in the early morning and his encounter with Matilda, the embodiment of innocent youth who replaces in his poem the patriarchs of tradition:

Eager already to search in and round
The heavenly forest, dense and living-green,
Which tempered to the eyes the new-born day,
Withouten more delay I left the bank,
Taking the level country slowly, slowly
Over the soil that everywhere breathes fragrance.
A softly breathing air, that no mutation
Had in itself, upon the forehead smote me
No heavier blow than of a gentle wind,
Whereat the branches, lightly tremulous,
Did all of them bow downward toward that side
Where its first shadow casts the Holy Mountain;

Yet not from their upright direction swayed
So that the little birds upon their tops
Should leave the practice of each art of theirs;
But with full ravishment the hours of prime,
Singing, received they in the midst of leaves,
That ever bore a burden to their rhymes,
Such as from branch to branch goes gathering on
Through the pine forest on the shore of Chiassi,
When Eolus unlooses the Sirocco.
Already my slow steps had carried me
Into the ancient woods so far that I
Could not perceive where I had entered it.
And lo! my further course a stream cut off,
Which tow'rd the left hand with its little waves
Bent down the grass that on its margin sprang.
All waters that on earth most limpid are
Would seem to have within themselves some mixture
Compared with that, which nothing doth conceal,
Although it moves on with a brown, brown current
Under the shade perpetual, that never
Ray of the sun lets in, nor of the moon.
With feet I stayed, and with mine eyes I passed
Beyond the rivulet, to look upon
The great variety of the fresh May.
And there appeared to me (even as appears
Suddenly something that doth turn aside
Through very wonder every other thought)
A lady all alone, who went along
Singing and culling floweret after floweret,
With which her pathway was all painted over.

"Ah, beauteous lady, who in rays of love
Dost warm thyself, if I may trust to looks,
Which the heart's witnesses are wont to be,
May the desire come unto thee to draw
Near to this river's bank," I said to her,
"So much that I may hear what thou art singing.
Thou makest me remember where and what
Proserpine that moment was when lost
Her mother her, and she herself the Spring."
As turns herself, with feet together pressed
And to the ground, a lady who is dancing,
And hardly puts one foot before the other,
On the vermilion and the yellow flowerets
She turned towards me, not in other wise
Than maiden who her modest eyes casts down;
And my entreaties made to be content,
So near approaching, that the dulcet sound
Came unto me together with its meaning.

[*Purgatory*, XXVIII: Longfellow.]

Dante's Garden of Eden is, we have seen, on the opposite side of the earth from the great continent. His allegorical island is hardly to be taken as a serious geographical conjecture, altho the question whether there was land on the other hemisphere was still open, and had been hotly debated. The theory, sometimes advanced, that not only another continent, but human beings as well, existed at the antipodes had been condemned by the Church. Men thus situated could hardly have descended from Adam; and they would be outside the reach of Christianity. The apparently harmless

doctrine of antipodes was therefore really incompatible with Christian tradition and aspiration, since it fashioned a race of men seemingly uncreated and uncontrolled by God. Dante's island, whether it was to him real or purely symbolical, escapes anathema, because it is devoid of living men. Spirits alone inhabit the solitary mount. Adam and Eve, to be sure, must have dwelt on its summit as long as they were innocent; but after their fall they were transferred to our quarter of the world—how, we are not told. Souls and angels are the only beings that Dante beholds. But disembodied spirits abound; for the poet conceived the happy idea of making the painful ascent of the mountain a symbol of penance, culminating in purification and the restoration of innocence. The mountainside is peopled with tortured but eager, hopeful souls, all making themselves clean for Heaven. This, then, is Purgatory, which previous writers had painted dark, dismal, subterranean, scarcely distinguishable from Hell. Thanks to Dante, it emerged into the sunshine, and its atmosphere of expectancy and progress was properly contrasted with the unchanging despair of the damned.

> Ah me! These open gates, how different
> From those of Hell! For music greets us here
> On entering; down yonder, wild lament.
>
> [*Purgatory*, XII.]

In his general conception of Hell, Dante does not depart so far from his theological predecessors, nor from

the numerous and widely circulated accounts of visions of the other world. About the earliest and perhaps the most important narrative of this sort in Christian times is the so-called *Apocalypse of St. Paul*, which goes back to the end of the fourth century. At a later date, two Irish visions, one of them associated with a spot called St. Patrick's Purgatory, had great currency. In all these, and in Dante, too, the place of punishment is buried inside the earth, wrapt in outer darkness, its thick air resonant with the sound of incessant weeping and gnashing of teeth. Only in his greater precision and his logical arrangement is Dante an innovator. The visions offer us only a confused mass of fantastic and hair-raising tortures, horror heaped on horror without system, shape, or sequence. Dante constructs an architectural Hades on a philosophical plan. His Sheol is an enormous, funnel-shaped cavity lying beneath the crust of the globe and extending to the very center, in which the tormented souls inhabit terraces that ring the slanting sides. Hither descend all sinners that die unrepentant; whereas Christians, however guilty, who repent before death and sin no more, are forgiven and permitted to regain their purity by discipline in Purgatory. Over the middle of Dante's Hell sits Jerusalem, while its apex, at the center of the earth, points toward the island of Purgatory on the other side. In the poet's allegory, Purgatory represents the reformation of the living sinner; Hell, the life of abiding sin; even as Heaven symbolizes spiritual exaltation. It must not be supposed, however,

that these regions were to Dante, or to his contemporaries, mere abstract images: they were as real as the Garden of Eden, and no cosmography could be complete without them.

The interior of the earth has also purely physical inhabitants. There lurk condenst vapors, which by their pressure cause earthquakes and force water to rise to the surface as springs. Outside in our air we likewise have vapors, and vapors of two kinds, wet and dry; the wet appearing in the form of rain, snow, or hail, the dry manifesting themselves as winds, meteors, or lightning. Both angels and demons have power over the elements, and can conjure up storms. A dramatic instance is related in Purgatory by the spirit of Buonconte da Montefeltro, who tells how, mortally wounded on the battlefield, he repented with his last gasp, and how a demon, defrauded of the soul for which it has been waiting, wreaks its vengeance on the dead body. That demon is not satisfied even to-day; for many a drencht traveler in the Casentino (the valley of the upper Arno) can testify to his continued vindictiveness.

An odd problem in physical geography is discust in the *Quæstio de Aqua et Terra*, a Latin lecture delivered in Verona on Jan. 20, 1320, something more than a year before Dante's death. The little work was almost certainly written by our poet, altho it is transmitted to us in no earlier form than a print of 1508. Having heard in Mantua, the year previous, a debate on the question whether the watery circumference of the globe is at any

point higher than the dry land, and dissenting from the affirmative decision then reacht, Dante wisht to put his arguments before the public. He shows that the round sheet of water which covers most of our sphere must have the same center as the earth which it envelops; that the surface of water is always level—that is, at an even distance from the center; that there cannot, therefore, be on any side of the globe an aqueous hump or eccentricity corresponding to the continent of land. If earth, which is heavier than water, rises above it in a certain region, the cause is not to be sought here below; for the phenomenon is contrary to the law of gravitation. It is the stars which by their combined attraction have pulled a part of the underlying earth above the water. Why God ordained that this should occur in the northern rather than in the southern hemisphere is a mystery which it were presumptuous to try to penetrate. "Canst thou by searching find out God?"

Next to Hell, the all-encircling ocean was an object of terror. Not only was its vastness repellent: it was made still more awful by whirlpools, bottomless pits, uncanny rocks and islands, monstrous beasts. To be sure, these very horrors allured the fancy and excited the curiosity of the brave. According to a story which in its details is of Dante's invention, Ulysses, in his old age, attempted one last and longest voyage. Sailing out through the Strait of Gibraltar into the broad Atlantic, he sped on and on, month after month, across the line and down the southern hemisphere, until he

came in sight of the mountain of Purgatory, the land of the dead. Then, at God's command, a storm sank his ship. This tale he tells, at Virgil's request, in Hell, where he and Diomed walk together, completely envelopt and hidden in a great forkt tongue of flame.

After the blaze had circled close to us,
When time and place appeared to suit my guide,
I heard his voice address the inmates thus:
"Ye two within a single flame who hide,
If service great or small I e'er did lend,
If e'er I served you, on the other side,
When, still alive, such glorious verse I penned,
Let one of you relate, ere ye retire,
Whither he strayed and went to meet his end."
The higher horn that capt the ancient pyre
Forthwith began to murmur and to dip,
And flickered like a wind-tormented fire;
Then, waving to and fro its topmost tip,
The likeness of a talking tongue it wore,
And utterance articulate let slip.
"When I left Circe, who a year and more
Delayed me near Gaëta by the sea
(Before Æneas ever named that shore),
No tenderness for child, nor sympathy
For aged sire, nor love legitimate
Which should have gladdened my Penelope,
Had power my inborn passion to abate
To know the world, its every nook and crook,
The good and evil of our human state.

O'er open deep once more my course I took;
A single ship had I, a tiny band
Of comrades who my side had ne'er forsook.
I visited the shore on either hand,
Morocco, Spain; Sardinia did I spy,
And, in that sea, each wave-encompast land.
Full stiff and old my fellows were, and I,
When finally we reacht the narrow cleft
Where Hercules his pillars lifted high,
A mark for man, of further flight bereft.
Sebilia then I past upon my right;
Already Septa faded on the left.
'Brethren,' I spake, 'thro' many and many a plight,
Despising dangers, ye have reacht the West.
Few moments now remain before the night
Enfold your senses in eternal rest.
Permit this fleeting eventide to scan
Th' unpeopled world, in sun-pursuing quest.
Consider what a noble thing is man!
Ye were not born to ruminate like kine,
But to achieve what wit and valor can.'
My comrades I so keenly did incline,
With brief harangue, untraveled ways to learn,
That scarce had they been checkt by words of mine.
And, leaving all the morning skies astern,
With flapping oars we winged our reckless flight;
But ever to the left our course did turn.
Already all the stars were seen by night
Of th' other pole, and ours so downward bent,
The sea's horizon hid it from our sight.

Five times rekindled, and as many spent,
Beneath the moon was all its monthly sheen,
While we upon our mighty journey went.
Then hove in sight a mount, of misty mien,
So far away it was; and towered so
That I its mate for height had never seen.
Great joy was ours, but soon it turned to woe:
On that new shore a whirlwind did begin,
And swept upon our bow with sudden blow.
Three times it made the boat and waters spin,
And, at the fourth, lifted our stern amain;
At Someone's beck, our stem went plunging in,
Till over us the ocean closed again."

[*Hell*, XXVI.]

Land, as well as sea, had its terrors. Strange animals and strange men dwelt on its remote confines. Scyths inhabited the north, Garamantes the extreme south. The mystery that enfolded so much of the earth was a powerful incentive to the imagination. With us, the contemplation of the unknown, the sense of wonder have been transferred to other fields: to the marvels of astronomical and chemical research, to the conquest of the elements by human intelligence, to speculation about bodiless spirit, mind, and soul—all rather distant, abstruse subjects for the "man in the street." Inevitably, then, imagination has paled with the fading of near-by ignorance; and poetry, which is the voice of imagination, has waned with it. Apprehension of demons, specters, and goblins, which once formed such a consid-

erable part of man's psychic existence, may have an emotional parallel, but surely has no picturesque equivalent, in our dread of microbes. The ghost has lost its winding-sheet; fear no longer evokes a visual image.

For astronomy, the authorities consulted by scholars were ancient Greeks and more recent Arabs, whose works were turned into Latin. The great master was Ptolemy, who has given his name to the theory of the universe that prevailed until the adoption, in the seventeenth century, of the Copernican, which is still in vogue. Natural history, botany, geography were derived from Pliny the Elder; from his follower, Solinus; from Strabo; from the Christian historian, Paulus Orosius; from the Arabic astronomer, Alfraganus. Much was added when, in the thirteenth century, Aristotle became available. Virtually all the learning accessible in that century was incorporated into the works of Albertus Magnus, the great German scholar of whom we have already spoken more than once. An Italian, Ristoro d'Arezzo, wrote in 1282 an interesting manual, in the vernacular, on the *Composition of the World.* Long before him, in the first half of the twelfth century, a popular scientist in Normandy, Philippe de Thaon by name, composed in the vulgar tongue some short treatises on stones, on the calendar, and on animals, the last two of which take an allegorical turn. The curious tales of Alexander the Great and his journey to India swelled the collection of fabulous lore. Stories of Kublai, the Great Khan of Tartary, found their way to the

West, thanks especially to that indomitable Venetian traveler, Marco Polo, who died in 1324, three years after Dante; the first European to see China, he visited central Asia, India, and Persia. The East was then, as later, the home of wonders. It was the favorite haunt of odd beasts, whose habits men never tired of telling. Solinus, following Pliny, describes an uncouth, composite creature called Mantichora; in Albertus Magnus the animal becomes Marintomorion, and eats the men it beguiles; in Brunetto Latini's *Trésor* it appears as the Indian monster, Manticore, with a man's face, a lion's body, a scorpion's tail—a devourer of human flesh. Dante calls it Geryon, and makes it a symbol of Fraud. As the poet and his guide stand on the brink of a vast circular precipice which girds a plain of sand, the master, taking Dante's girdle, throws it down into the void as a signal; whereupon the huge beast comes swimming up through the thick, dark air.

The girdle, wholly from my waist despoiled,
Obedient to my monitor's command,
I handed to him, knotted up and coiled.
And he, with mighty swing of trunk and hand,
Adown the deep unfathomed let it fly,
Some distance from the solid edge of land.
"A curious thing will certainly reply
To such a curious signal," I opined,
"Followed so closely by my master's eye."
But O! how circumspect should be mankind
With those who see not outward acts alone
But also read the secrets of the mind!

To me my leader: "Shortly shall be shown
What I expect; and what thy fancy dreams,
Here presently thine eyes shall make their own."
To every truth that kin to falsehood seems
A man should close his lips with purpose strong:
Such guileless speech with ignominy teems.
But now I must speak out! And by the song
My poem singeth, reader, hear me swear
(So may its reputation linger long!)
That swimming thro' the thick and murky air,
Terrific to the stoutest, steadiest heart,
A figure I beheld ascending there,
As cometh up the man who dives to start
A clinging anchor caught by rocky teeth
Or other fangs in ocean's hidden part—
Bulging above, contracted underneath.

. . . . . .

"Behold the beast with pointed tail upcurled,
Which shatters walls, and mountains crosses o'er;
Behold the monster that infects the world!"
My master thus began to speak once more;
And near the marble path our feet had trod
He beckoned to the brute to come ashore.
And that unclean epitome of Fraud
Came floating up, and beacht its head and chest,
But left its unsupported tail abroad.
Its face, quite human, righteousness exprest,
Such piety was in its outer hide;
But serpentlike in shape was all the rest.
Two paws it hath, with shaggy hair supplied;
And little loops and knots depicted lurk
Along its back and breast and either side.

No warp and woof by Tartar made, or Turk,
Compose a cloth with motleyer colors planned;
No pattern such did e'er Aracne work.
As skiffs at times are left upon the strand
And half on earth and half in water lie,
As yonder in the greedy Teuton's land
The beaver seats himself, his trade to ply,
Upon the sand-enclosing stony ring
Thus lay the horrid creature high and dry.
In empty space its tail was brandishing
And twisting up the venom-laden fork
Which armed its summit like a scorpion's sting.
[*Hell*, XVI, XVII.]

A type of Latin work (originally derived from Greek) called Physiologus, dating from the earliest medieval times, was the starting-point for a series of treatises known as Bestiaries, dealing with the looks and ways of animals, some of which never came out of the Ark. Occasionally the interest of the description is enhanced by a symbolic interpretation. There were also similar accounts of precious stones, which went under the name of Lapidaries. The writings of Philippe de Thaon, recently mentioned, afford examples of both. In the verses cited above we have a reference to the belief that the beaver catches fish by dangling its tail in the water. Elsewhere Dante seems to have in mind certain legendary characteristics of the wolf: that in time of famine it eats dirt; that when it sees a man before the man sees the wolf, it strikes him dumb. It is related of the wolf also that when it is trying to steal into a yard,

it goes very softly; and if it happens to make a noise with its foot, it bites the offending member as hard as it can and thus takes vengeance. When hunters have robbed a tigress of her young, they leave mirrors along the way as they flee; and as soon as the pursuing mother sees herself in the glass, she is so enraptured that she forgets her children and her grief. The panther has such a sweet and fragrant breath that every creature that approaches her is unwilling to depart, and lingers till it dies. The pelican restores its young to life with its own blood, and for that reason has become a symbol of the Saviour.

We inhabit a far bigger and vaguer universe than that which was charted by medieval science. Instead of the millions of millions of years and millions of millions of miles, which are too vast to convey to us anything but a misty impression of abstract size, Eusebius and Alfraganus furnisht their readers with figures that were at once precise and sufficiently moderate to be grasped by a willing mind. The earth, according to the *Convivio*, is 20,400 miles in circumference, or 6,500 in diameter. Around it is a stratum of air; and this in turn is surrounded by a layer of fire, to which every flame here below is trying to return. The diameter of Mercury, the smallest planet, is 232 miles; that of the sun, the biggest planet, is 35,750, or 5¼ times that of the earth. Our globe, being so much smaller than the body that illumines it, casts into space a tapering shadow; and the apex of this conical shade reaches to the sphere of

Venus, a distance of 542,750 miles. The sun, as we have just said, is a planet, like Mercury and Venus; and so is the moon. The planets are seven, all of them revolving around our globe, whose center is, for most astronomers, the center of gravity and of revolution for the whole universe. In the order of proximity to us, the planets are: the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. The relation of these bodies to their respective spheres or heavens has already been explained. Beyond all of these lie the fixt stars, which, like the earth, the moon, and the other planets, receive most or all of their light from the sun. This light, however, is not reflected; it is rather absorbed and transmitted. The moon-spots, which Dante once attributed to the greater rarity and consequent inferior refracting power of some portions of the moon, he later ascribed to differences in the quality of the moon's substance, some parts having more affinity for light than others. The same explanation applies to the various degrees of brightness in the fixt stars. These orbs, wellnigh infinitely divergent from one another in quality, serve to differentiate the uniform primal energy of the world, which they distribute to the heavens below for further modification by the planets. Still more remote from us, an invisible but inconceivably active rind of the spherical universe, is the Crystalline Heaven or Primum Mobile. With this heaven, matter ceases. Outside is the illimitable realm of spirit, the abode of the angels and the blest; it is the mind of God, which encompasses everything.

The angels that govern the spheres are divided into nine orders, corresponding to the heavens they rule. The simple Angels are associated with the moon, Archangels with Mercury, Principalities with Venus, Powers with the sun, Virtues with Mars, Thrones with Saturn, Cherubim with the fixt stars, Seraphim with the Primum Mobile. These names are all to be found in the Bible, but without particular manifest significance. For a classification of the angels and a description of their various functions we must look to a Greek treatise on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, formerly ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Paul's convert in Athens. In reality the work, which is essentially Neo-Platonic, cannot be earlier than the fifth century. It was thought, however, to embody the observations made by St. Paul when he was "caught up into paradise."

CHAPTER X

MAN AND HIS WORKS

AS the whole visible world is but a little ball in space, so the history of mankind is but a moment in eternity. Christ was born 5,200 years after the creation. The whole duration of life on earth, from Genesis to Last Judgment, was limited to some 7,000 years. In 1300, then, it had only 500 years or so to run. As Dante says, "We have come to the last age of our world." The record of preceding ages, as far as it was known to Alighieri's contemporaries, was preserved, first of all, in the Bible; then in Livy; in the *Excidium Trojæ* of Dares and Dictys, and in the French, Latin, and Italian developments of it; in the Latin poets, Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Statius; in the collection of anecdotes made by Valerius Maximus; in the *Historia adversus Paganos*, the first attempt at a compendium of universal history, composed not far from 400 A.D., by Paulus Orosius, at the suggestion of St. Augustine. This last book, as its title suggests, was intended to refute the pagan contention that the influence of Christianity has been disastrous to mankind. The Bible furnisht the annals of the He-

brew people and their neighbors from the creation until after the establishment of the Church of Christ. Ovid, the flippant, sensuous, artistic author of the *Metamorphoses*, the *Art* and *Remedies of Love*, and the *Heroides*, introduces us to a great many of the characters of heathen antiquity; moreover, the serious minds of the Middle Ages saw in his verses a profound allegory and a moral purpose. Statius, an elaborately rhetorical poet, tells us in the *Thebaid* the story of Thebes and the war of the Seven; in the *Achilleid*, a part of the tale of Troy. We get another version of the Trojan matter in Dares and Dictys, and one phase of it in Virgil. The *Æneid* carries further the history of Æneas and his companions after their escape from burning Troy, narrating his pathetic adventure with Queen Dido in Carthage and his conquests in Italy, which ultimately led to the founding of Rome. Furthermore, it prophesies the glory of the Imperial City. Livy picturesquely details for us the doings of the Romans under the kings and under the republic. Lucan's epic, the *Pharsalia*, relates in tellingly emphatic style the civil wars of Cæsar, Pompey, and Cato. Something of the Empire could be learned from Paulus Orosius and from Valerius Maximus. From that time on, records were more fragmentary, usually local, and not generally available. There were some histories of universal importance, such as the sixth century *Historia Francorum* by Gregory of Tours, Einhard's biography of Charlemagne, and in the twelfth century William of Malmesbury's *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*.

Contemporary events were recorded in many chronicles, some of which had by way of introduction a string of old legends. This is notably the case with Villani's great chronicle of Florence, written in the fourteenth century; for its first book contains a precious collection of ancient tales connected with the founding of the city. Some histories, like Wace's *Roman de Brut*, begin with remote fable and end with modern fact.

Ancient mythology had to be pickt up with history, and the two were not always distinguisht: in fact, it is not always easy to distinguish them to-day. There were of course no "classical handbooks," inasmuch as the first manual of mythology was made by Boccaccio, a generation after Dante. The great storehouse of information about the doings of gods and goddesses was Ovid, with his *Metamorphoses;* also there was a vast deal to be found in the erudite Statius, some in Virgil and Lucan. We have seen how great was Virgil's importance in medieval schools. With him, Dante groups Ovid and Lucan; also Horace, with whose *Poetics* he was acquainted, and Homer, whom he knew only by reputation. In the *Vita Nuova*, he cites them all together when explaining and defending his use of personification as a literary figure. The same five meet, with Dante, in the Limbus, the underground dwelling of the souls of worthy pagans:

> In the mean time a voice was heard by me:
> "All honour be to the pre-eminent Poet;
> His shade returns again, that was departed."

After the voice had ceased and quiet was,
Four mighty shades I saw approaching us;
Semblance they had nor sorrowful nor glad.
To say to me began my gracious Master:
"Him with that falchion in his hand behold,
Who comes before the three, even as their lord.
That one is Homer, Poet sovereign;
He who comes next is Horace, the satirist;
The third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan.
Because to each of these with me applies
The name that solitary voice proclaimed,
They do me honour, and in that do well."
Thus I beheld assemble the fair school
Of that lord of the song pre-eminent,
Who o'er the others like an eagle soars.
When they together had discoursed somewhat,
They turned to me with signs of salutation,
And on beholding this, my Master smiled;
And more of honour still, much more, they did me,
In that they made me one of their own band;
So that the sixth was I, 'mid so much wit.

[*Hell*, VI: Longfellow.]

Dante must have studied Statius later in his life; for he does not mention him in the *Vita Nuova*, and in the *Commedia* he introduces him long after the others, in quite a different way. It is in Purgatory, on the terrace of avarice and prodigality, at the moment when Dante and Virgil have just left Hugh Capet, that Statius, under dramatic circumstances, makes his first appearance:

Already had we gone afar from him,
All eagerness along the road to hie
So long as we were granted strength of limb;
When, like a falling thing, the mountain I
Felt quaking! Such a chill came over me
As seizes on a man who goes to die.
Old Delos never shook so mightily,
Before Latona took it for her bed
To bear those twins who make the skies to see.
On every hand arose a shout so dread,
My master came to me with ready stride;
"The while I guide thee, have no fear," he said.
And "Gloria Deo in excelsis!" cried
The spirits all around, as I inferred
From those whose speech was plainest, near my side.
And, like the shepherds who that song first heard,
All motionless we listened, all intent,
Until the quaking ceast, and every word.
Once more upon our holy road we went,
And watcht the spirits prostrate on the ground
Already taking up their old lament.
No ignorance with such an angry wound
Of greediness to learn e'er plagued me so
(Unless my recollection is unsound)
As now I smarted with desire to know.
My mind, unaided, vainly tried to guess;
Nor dared I ask, so great our haste to go.
Thus I went on, in fear and thoughtfulness.

. . . . . .

Tormented me the inborn thirst, allayed
By naught except the draught our Saviour meant,
For which the woman of Samaria prayed;

And, prickt by haste, behind my guide I went,
Nor dared upon th' encumbered road to stay,
Grieved by the sight of righteous punishment.
And lo! as, in the Scripture, Luke doth say
That Christ, arisen from his burial grot,
Appeared to two disciples on the way,
A shade came up behind us, speeding hot;
But, gazing at the throng beside our feet,
Until it spoke to us, we saw it not.
"God give you peace, my brothers!" We, to greet
The spirit, turned at once; Virgil addrest
To it the answering signal that is meet,
And then began: "Now may the just behest
Which me eternally hath banishèd
Bring thee in peace among the council blest!"
"What?" cried the shade, the while we onward sped,
"If ye be souls God bideth not on high,
So far along his stairs who hath you led?"

[*Purgatory*, XX, XXI.]

After Virgil has answered this question, Statius proceeds to satisfy the curiosity that is consuming the other two. Whenever (he says) a soul has completed its penance and is free to rise to Heaven, the mountain quakes and the spirits all join in a chorus of thanksgiving, as they have done even now for Statius himself, who has just been set at liberty. Later will be cited a pretty scene in which the poet of the *Thebaid* learns that one of his new companions is his ancient master, Virgil.

In the opinion of some theologians, the pagan deities were fallen angels, or devils, who had seduced mankind

to worship them. Dante, better verst in the Latin poets, evidently regarded many of these divinities as mere rhetorical abstractions, and therefore felt no compunction about invoking Apollo and the Muses. Of the Nine Sisters he spoke, in the passage of the *Vita Nuova* recently mentioned, as of things without reality. They and the Delphic deity were merely figures of speech, standing for the poetic art and inspiration.

> O Muses, soaring genius, help me here!
> O memory, recording what I saw,
> Herein shall thy nobility appear.
>
> [*Hell*, II.]

Thus cries the poet at the outset of his description of Hell. When embarking on the narrative of his journey through Purgatory, he sings:

> At last the little vessel of my mind
> Doth hoist its sails to cross a better sea,
> Leaving that cruel ocean far behind.
> The second kingdom now my theme shall be,
> Wherein the human soul becometh clean,
> Fit to ascend to Paradise, and free.
> Let poesy revive, which dead hath been,
> O holy Muses, since ye bid me sing!
> And let Calliope again be seen,
> My words with that same tune accompanying
> Which once the wretched Magpies smote so sore
> The foolish maids despaired of everything.
>
> [*Purgatory*, I.]

The *Paradiso* he opens with this splendid prelude:

The glory of the Lord who moveth all
Pervades the world, but shineth here more bright
While yonder doth its ray more dimly fall.
That heaven which most receiveth of his light
Mine eyes have seen, and things beyond the wit
Or speech of one descended from that height;
For as we near the throne whereon doth sit
Our heart's Desire, the mind grows so profound
That recollection cannot follow it.
Yet all that I of that most holy ground
Could hoard or store away in memory
Shall now within my final song resound.
For this, my last endeavor, me with thee,
O good Apollo, kindly so endow
That I be worthy of thy laurel tree.
Until this time, one range has been enow
Of Mount Parnassus; now I need the twain
To win the champion's wreath to deck my brow.

[*Paradise*, I.]

Shortly after come these significant lines:

O ye who, following in little boats,
Eager to hear, have come so long a way
Behind my ship, which singeth as it floats,
Go back and seek your shores while yet ye may!
Tempt not the ocean! Haply were ye lost,
If, losing trace of me, your craft should stray.
The sea I enter never yet was crost.
Minerva sends the wind, Apollo steers,
Nine Muses chart the stars of polar frost.

Ye others, few, who turned in early years
To eat the holy bread that angels keep,
Which feedeth men, but always scant appears,
Well may ye venture on the salty deep,
If but your skiff run close upon my wake
Before the sea resumes its level sleep.

[*Paradise*, II.]

Jupiter, or Jove, our author apparently lookt upon as the ancient sages' misty conception of the real God. Poets always have in them something of the seer; and the mighty bards of old, those towering intellects, surely had some glimmering of the truth. When they sang of the battle of the giants against the gods, they were vaguely aware of the revolt of the angels under Lucifer; when they spoke of Juno, Minerva, Ceres, they had indistinctly in mind the heavenly intelligences; when they described the Golden Age, they had a dim idea of the state of man before the fall. Matilda, after extolling the Garden of Eden to Dante, Virgil, and Statius, adds these words:

"Those ancient poets who, inspired, did trace
The Golden Age and its felicity,
Haply were dreaming of this very place.
For here humanity from sin was free;
Here spring eternal, fruit of every kind;
The nectar all men speak of, here ye see."
The while she spake, I turned and lookt behind
At both my bards, and saw that, as they heard,
A smile disclosed the thought within their mind.

[*Purgatory*, XXVIII.]

Dante does not scruple, then, to use the name "Jove" in addressing the Christian God. After indignantly enumerating the unpunisht sins of Italy, he exclaims:

> And if my lips may speak, almighty Jove,
> That once for us wast crucified on earth,
> Thy vengeful eyes, O! whither do they rove?
> [*Purgatory*, VI.]

Other divinities and sacred personages, especially those associated with the underworld, Dante treats in the traditional fashion, transforming them into grotesque demons of Hell. Here is Plutus, the god of wealth, a puffy scarecrow, clucking an unintelligible jargon, so unsubstantial a creature that when Virgil turns upon the "swollen face" and bids it consume itself and its rage together, the fiend collapses helplessly.

> As wind-inflated sails, replete and round,
> Come tumbling down, when snaps the broken mast,
> So sprawled that cruel monster on the ground.
> [*Hell*, VII.]

Minos, the majestic judge of departed souls, becomes a long-tailed goblin.

> There horrid snarling Minos twines and toils,
> Examines sins, gives sentence with his tail,
> Changing the number of its circling coils.
> [*Hell*, V.]

This interpretation of mythology enables Dante to transfer from the *Æneid* to his Hell some of Virgil's

otherworld figures. Charon, Cerberus, the Furies mingle with the horned devils of Christian demonology; the Minotaur, too, finds a place in the picture, as well as Centaurs and Harpies, in a fashion which, for the latter-day reader, is strangely incongruous. Charon still officiates at the ferry of the dead:

And then behold! toward us came a bark,
Bearing an old man, white with hoary age,
And saying, "Woe to you, ye spirits dark;
Hope never ye to see Heaven's heritage:
I come to take you to the other coast,
Eternal gloom, and heat, and winter's rage.
And thou, who standest there, thou living ghost,
Withdraw thyself from these that come as dead."
But when he saw I did not leave that host,
"By other ways, by other ports," he said,
"Thou wilt that region reach, not here: received
In lighter bark than mine thou shalt be led."
Then spake my leader: "Charon, be not grieved;
This is there willed where Will and Power are one,
Nor question what should be at once believed."
Then quiet were those cheeks, with beard o'ergrown,
Of that old pilot of the livid lake,
Around whose eyes two fiery circles shone.
But those poor souls, whose naked forms did quake,
Changed colour when they heard his accents hoarse,
And gnashed their teeth, and then blaspheming spake
On God and kith and kin their bitter curse,
Mankind, the place, the time, the evil lot
Of their engendering, and their birth perverse.

Then drew they all together to one spot,
With bitter weeping, on that dreary shore,
Which waits each soul where fear of God dwells not.
And Charon, fiend with eyes that flamed all o'er,
With signs and nods around him gathers all,
And strikes each lingering spirit with his oar.
And as in autumn time the sere leaves fall,
Each after other, till the branch, left bare,
Yields to the earth its spoils funereal,
In likewise Adam's evil offspring fare.
They from that shore leap, beckoned, one by one,
As hawk that at its lure swoops down through air.
So they o'er those dark waters swift are gone,
And ere o' the further side they disembark,
On this another troop together run.

[*Hell*, III: Plumptre.]

In the third circle of Hell, Cerberus personifies gluttony and presides over the torments of the gluttons:

Huge hail, dark water, whirling clouds of snow
There through the murky air come sweeping on;
Foul smells the earth which drinks this in below;
And Cerberus, fierce beast, like whom is none,
Barks like a dog from out his triple jaws,
At all the tribe those waters close upon.
Red glare his eyes and taloned are his paws,
His belly large, his beard all greased and foul;
Those souls he tears, flays, quarters with his claws.
That rain-storm makes them all like fierce dogs howl;
This side with that they vainly seek to screen,
And round and round those wretched sinners roll.

When Cerberus, that great serpent, us had seen,
His mouth he opened and his tusks were shown,
And not a limb was as it erst had been.
And then my Leader, with his palms out-thrown,
Took of the earth, and filling full his hand,
Into those hungry gullets flung it down:
And as a dog who, craving food, doth stand
Barking, grows quiet while his food he gnaws,
And feels and fights at hunger's fierce command,
So was it with those vile and filthy jaws
Of Cerberus the fiend, who roars so dread,
The souls would fain that it might deafness cause.

[*Hell*, VI: Plumptre.]

After all, these classical figures, grown thus hideous, are not out of harmony with the rest. Compare with them the description of Lucifer (called also Dis and Satan) embedded in the ice of frozen Cocytus at the bottom of Hell:

When to the point we came,
Whereat my guide was pleased that I should see
The creature eminent in beauty once,
He from before me stepp'd and made me pause.
"Lo!" he exclaimed, "lo, Dis; and lo the place,
Where thou hast need to arm thy heart with strength."
How frozen and how faint I then became,
Ask me not, reader! for I write it not;
Since words would fail to tell thee of my state.
I was not dead nor living. Think thyself,
If quick conception work in thee at all,
How I did feel. That emperor, who sways

The realm of sorrow, at mid breast from the ice
Stood forth; and I in stature am more like
A giant, than the giants are his arms.
Mark now how great that whole must be, which suits
With such a part. If he were beautiful
As he is hideous now, and yet did dare
To scowl upon his Maker, well from him
May all our misery flow. Oh what a sight!
How passing strange it seem'd, when I did spy
Upon his head three faces: one in front
Of hue vermilion, the other two with this
Midway each shoulder join'd and at the crest;
The right 'twixt wan and yellow seem'd; the left
To look on, such as come from whence old Nile
Stoops to the lowlands. Under each shot forth
Two mighty wings, enormous as became
A bird so vast. Sails never such I saw
Outstretched on the wide sea. No plumes had they,
But were in texture like a bat; and these
He flapp'd i' th' air, that from him issued still
Three winds, wherewith Cocytus to its depth
Was frozen. At six eyes he wept: the tears
Adown three chins distill'd with bloody foam.
At every mouth his teeth a sinner champ'd,
Bruised as with ponderous engine; so that three
Were in this guise tormented. But far more
Than from that gnawing, was the foremost pang'd
By the fierce rending, whence oft-times the back
Was stripp'd of all its skin. "That upper spirit,
Who hath worst punishment," so spake my guide,
"Is Judas, he that hath his head within

And plies the feet without. Of th' other two,
Whose heads are under, from the murky jaw
Who hangs, is Brutus: lo! how he doth writhe
And speaks not. The other, Cassius, that appears
So large of limb. But night now reascends;
And it is time for parting. All is seen."

[*Hell*, XXXIV: Cary.]

When we pass from ancient mythology and history to the field of pure literature, we find that the surviving classical authors are about the same that we have already met. All the Greek poets are lost; nothing remains but a few names and a quotation or two. A Latin paraphrase of the *Iliad*, in 1070 hexameters, made early in the Empire, seems not to have lasted long. The historians and orators of Greece have vanisht. Dante knew no Greek, except some detacht words which he got, for the most part, from a curious book by Uguccione da Pisa, called the *Great Derivations*. On the Latin side, Horace, as we have seen, is to be added to the list; but not much of him was accessible. Juvenal was still extant. Lucretius, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius had disappeared from ken. In the scholarly twelfth century, Persius, Sallust, Quintilian, Petronius, Symmachus were still read by the learned, but later fell into neglect. Martial apparently dropt out a little earlier. No classic dramatists, Greek or Latin, with the possible exception of Seneca, seem to have been known at first hand to Dante, altho Terence, who had been familiar to some medieval students of an earlier age, had come to his

notice through mention by other writers. There is no evidence that our poet ever had occasion to form a clear conception of a theatrical performance. All the great Latin prose writers were gone by his time, excepting Livy, Pliny the elder, and some philosophical and ethical works of Cicero and Seneca.

In philosophy we are somewhat better off. Plato's *Timæus* was available in a Latin version; also, it would seem, at least parts of the *Phædo* and *Meno*. Most of Aristotle (but not his *Poetics*) was saved from oblivion and turned into Latin. Cicero's philosophical writings fared well, as we have just noted, altho his orations and letters were not yet unearthed; and the moral treatises of Seneca had survived. To these we may add the *Consolation of Philosophy*, written by Boethius early in the sixth century, and the huge output of St. Augustine in the fourth and fifth. Gregory the Great, a little later than Boethius, performed a useful task in refashioning and transmitting St. Augustine, even as Boethius, Cassiodorus, and, a little later, Isidore of Seville transmitted classical knowledge and thought. This Cassiodorus, a mighty general under Theodoric, retired to a cloister in 540 and composed several works of instruction and edification, notably the *Institutions* and the *Soul*. Cicero and Boethius were Dante's first masters in philosophy, and in them—so he tells us—he sought comfort when the death of Beatrice left him solitary.

When the first joy of my soul was lost, concerning whom mention hath been made above, I was left so pierced with

sadness that no comfort availed me. Nevertheless, after some time, my mind, which was striving to be healed, determined—since neither my own consolation nor that of others was helpful—to return to the way that some disconsolate ones had followed to be comforted. And I set myself to read that book of Boethius, unknown to many, in which, a prisoner and an outcast, he had consoled himself. And hearing, furthermore, that Tully had written another book, in which, treating of *Friendship*, he had offered words of comfort to Lælius, a most excellent man, on the death of his friend Scipio, I began to read that. And altho it was difficult for me at first to enter into their meaning, I did at last so far enter therein as the art of grammar which I possest and my small wit enabled me to do; by means of which wit I had already perceived many things, as in a dream, as may be seen in my *Vita Nuova*.

[*Banquet*, II, xiii.]

Not only the *De Amicitia*, but the *De Officiis* and apparently the *Republica* as well, came to be household books for our poet. Boethius became equally familiar.

Boethius, or St. Severinus, was a Roman of noble family, a scholar, philosopher, and statesman, who held the office of consul, and afterwards that of *magister officiorum* at the court of the Gothic King Theodoric. His probity and his great political influence provoked enmity. Falsely accused of treason, he was imprisoned, and was finally executed in 525. Of great importance for many generations was his Latinization and exposition of Aristotle's works on logic, since his version remained the standard text-book of dialectic until the

close of the twelfth century. Other school-books he translated or compiled, one on arithmetic, one on geometry. He wrote also some Christian tracts and a treatise on music. Besides these, he left one of the most beautiful works of all time, the *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, composed in prison, a compendium of the best Greek thought, viewed by a Christian. It was immensely liked in the Middle Ages: Alfred the Great turned some of it into Anglo-Saxon, Chaucer into English. Strangely enough, there is in it nothing distinctly Christian except its general spirit.

St. Augustine, too, was verst in Greek philosophy; but after his conversion he was above all a militant Christian, a champion of the doctrine of predestination and grace. Altho he is the principal Latin Father of the Church, he has much in common with Calvinism, both in belief and in character. Born in Numidia of a worldly pagan father and a saintly Christian mother, he received an excellent education, and, going full of ambition and love of pleasure to the wicked city of Carthage, he plunged into fashionable dissipation. Having become a teacher, the young man gave instruction in his native town, in Carthage, in Rome, and in Milan. He was early drawn to Manichæism, and in spite of the exhortations of his mother, St. Monica, adhered to that sect for nine years. Unsettled in his convictions, he came under the influence of Plato, and was finally converted to Christianity by St. Ambrose in 387. Afterwards he was made bishop of Hippo. A

voluminous writer, he produced, among many other things, the most interesting of all spiritual *Confessions*, treatises on the Trinity and on Christian doctrine, commentaries on the Bible, sermons, letters, and his masterpiece, *On the City of God*.

From Boethius on, Dante's philosophers, with the exception, perhaps, of the Moor Averrhoes, are all Christian theologians. He was well acquainted with nearly every one of those mentioned earlier in this book and with some besides—for instance, with the seventh-century encyclopedist, St. Isidore of Seville. St. Thomas he knew best of all; nor was he ignorant of St. Thomas's master, Albertus Magnus. Philosophy at that time embraced much that now goes under other names. With ethics, metaphysics, physics, and politics, it included a large part of the whole store of human knowledge. In the field of government, Dante had read, besides Aristotle and Cicero, the medieval works of Egidio Colonna on princes and on ecclesiastical power. Economics is a science of recent growth. Grammar and rhetoric, which formed a branch apart, were represented by a good many text-books, especially by the fourth-century grammar of Donatus and the rhetoric ascribed to Cicero. Priscian was not unknown. Esthetic speculation, in the absence of Aristotle's *Poetics*, had little standing, and Dante's studies along this line, as well as in general linguistics, are largely of the nature of original research, a method of procedure quite repugnant to the static habit of the Middle Ages.

In his general conception of the universe, Dante followed, as we have noted, the astronomer Ptolemy and, on the spiritual side, the Pseudo-Dionysius. These authorities he may have known both directly and through many intermediaries. His understanding of natural phenomena was, however, derived for the most part from Aristotle. In metaphysics and ethics he may be described as a Christian Aristotelian; that is, he received the teachings of the "master of those that know" through the medium of St. Thomas, who, following Albertus Magnus, had adapted them to Christian use. In his fundamental belief concerning the soul, for instance, Dante differs widely from the Greek philosophers, from whom, nevertheless, his terminology and his detailed information are borrowed. For Dante, every human being has an individual soul, free and, with the light of grace, self-sufficient, created for the infant at its birth.

Like to a babe that chirps 'mid smiles and tears,
Forth from his hand who loves it ere 't is brought
To separate existence, there appears
The simple little soul, which knoweth naught,
Except that—child of gladness—willingly
It turns to all that hath its fancy caught.

17 [*Purgatory*, XVI.]

CHAPTER XI

ALLEGORY

WE have seen how great a part in Dante's intellectual life was played by Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, and Statius. In considering these narrative poets—and Livy, too—we must remember that their tales called up in the medieval mind quite different pictures from those they suggest to us. Thanks to centuries of philological and archeological research, we can now form some idea of the classical background. We know approximately how the people of old Greece and Rome lookt, how they lived, what their surroundings were. We know, or think we know, how the ancient poets regarded the myths and legends they repeated. In the Middle Ages historical science was still unborn; and the heroes of eld were therefore imagined as very similar in character, conduct, dress, and social relations to the men of the reader's own time. Adam, Solomon, King Priam, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, King Arthur, Charlemagne, Frederick II were all of a kind, had the same view of life, felt and acted in the same way. The notion of continuous progress is of quite recent origin. Adam, Dante tells us (and we

find the same idea in the thirteenth-century *Image du monde*), was the wisest of all merely human beings, because he was created by God's own hand; Solomon was the wisest of all kings. Knowledge may to some extent be accumulated by experience, but not wisdom: wisdom is inborn, a product of grace.

There is another difference, a fundamental one, between the medieval interpretation of Virgil and Ovid and our own. To the thirteenth-century student their verses conveyed a message beyond the obvious import of the words. The *Æneid*, in its essentials, was literally true, but it contained also a hidden significance and, in places, several secret meanings, one buried beneath the other. In Ovid, for the most part, the cryptic revelation alone was real, the apparent story being pleasant but unsubstantial fiction. We may be sure that for Dante the narratives of Thebes and Troy by Statius contained much esoteric symbolism. He pictures Statius, contrary to history, as a Christian; and he would hardly have ventured to do so had he not thought he had unearthed in the Latin poet's mythology an undiscovered confession of his faith. As is well known, Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue*, in which he congratulates Pollio on the birth of a son, was understood, from the fourth century on, as an unconscious prophecy of the coming of Christ. Even to our skeptical ears the Latin poet's mysterious verses have an oracular sound:

> The mighty sequence of time is renewed from its very foundation.

The virgin returneth to earth, and the golden ages of Saturn. A child like to none before descends from the summit of heaven.

It was this passage, according to Dante, that first converted Statius, even as another phrase of the same author first made him aware that prodigality (his besetting fault) is a sin. Virgil's Latin, in its obvious interpretation, signifies:

> To what dost thou drive the spirits of men,
> Accursèd hunger for gold!
>
> [*Æneid*, III.]

But careful study and a willing mind reveal another possible rendering, an admonition to allow a holy or moderate desire to preserve us alike from avarice and from lavishness:

> Why rulest thou not the spirits of men,
> O holy hunger for gold?
>
> [*Purgatory*, XXII.]

The habit of allegorical interpretation and composition, the search for hidden meanings in literature and life, and the consequent development of symbolic art, not only in words but in stone as well, lent to the Middle Ages a character quite different from that of the periods which preceded and followed.

Allegory, wherever it has appeared, seems to have first arisen from an attempt to explain outworn rites and myths. Stories of gods and goddesses having become unbelievable to a more rationalistic generation, the

origin of venerable ceremonies having been forgotten, a new age tried to give them a fresh significance by imputing to their creators a symbolic intention. In Europe such allegorical methods of interpretation arose both in Christian and in pagan circles. Let us look first at the pagans. Foremost in literary interest are the myths of Homer, whose deities, at the hands of commentators, were robbed of their reality and transformed into emblematic figures. The process started, as early as the sixth century B.C., in an effort to reduce to respectability certain celestial happenings that had begun to look scandalous; and it grew in scope and favor, despite Plato's protest. This philosopher, while he made happy use of allegory for the purpose of exposition, opposed the employment of it in religious criticism. The symbolic principle was later applied to Latin poets, especially Ovid and Virgil. The latter began to be allegorized shortly after his death. When we consider his immense importance in medieval education, we can form some idea of the far-reaching consequences of such fantastic interpretation of his lines. From the first centuries of our era, commentaries on the great poet and sage were abundant, and several of them were mainly allegorical. The most successful Virgil specialist, however, was only occasionally a symbolist. This is Servius Honoratus, of the fourth century, whose widely read explanation of the text from the linguistic, the historical, the mythological, and the rhetorical standpoint was a mine of information for the

medieval student and was not disdained by the scholars of the Renaissance. Here is a specimen of his more imaginative vein. In the sixth book of the *Æneid*, when Æneas and the Sybil are about to leave the lower world, Anchises lets them out through one of the gates of sleep. There are two such portals: one of horn, whence issue true shades; one of ivory, affording passage to false dreams. Servius comments thus:

> In this place Virgil has followed Homer. But with this difference, that Homer says dreams go out through both doors, while Virgil distinguishes *true shades*, by which he means true *dreams*, and the meaning is exprest poetically. For he wishes it to be understood that all he has said is false. And physiologically there is this interpretation: by the *horny door* are meant the eyes, which are of horny color, and harder than other members, for they do not feel the cold (as Cicero also says in his books *On the Nature of the Gods*); but by the *ivory door* is meant the mouth, so called from the teeth. And we know that the things we say may be false, but the things we see are certainly true.

The allegorical interpretation of the Eclogues was more or less justified, but was carried to extravagant excess. Commentators fell into the habit of ascribing to the poet himself all the incidents that could by any possibility be referred to him. Presently the whole work came to be expounded in symbolic fashion. After the direct and natural explanation came the allegorical, varied according to the taste of each grammarian. Inasmuch as a single allegory could not be applied to all the verses of

an eclogue, several allegories were assumed for one and the same poem. Christians, taking Virgil as a pagan prophet, were fond of discovering in him an anticipation of Christian doctrine—a taste which found easier gratification in the study of the Greek philosophers. Finally allegorical interpretation became a general practice and invaded all Virgilian exegesis. It was believed, for instance, that Virgil set forth symbolically all Roman history, from Æneas to his own time, very much as the Old Testament foretells the New. It was assumed that every heroic poem constructs its fiction out of disguised references to great historical events and characters: Romulus and Remus, for instance, stand for Augustus and Agrippa. The sixth book of the *Æneid*, with its descent into the world of the dead, naturally offered to philosophers and grammarians abundant opportunity for devising all sorts of moral interpretations; but no part of the poem escaped distortion. Servius, whom we recently met, exhibits a temporary reaction against the prevailing method; but even he, as we have seen, from time to time falls into it. Often he cites, with or without disapproval, the symbolic speculations of others. "Many," he says, "understand this passage allegorically." And elsewhere: "What is the need of allegory here?"

Let us turn now to Christian tradition. The Bible, like the *Iliad*, contains incidents which, judged according to the letter, are unedifying. Hebrew literature, moreover, is full of imaginative metaphor which very

early suggested an allegorical system of exposition. Christian theologians continued and, under Greek influence, adapted to their own purpose the Hebrew style of interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies. On the Jewish side, Philo of Alexandria elaborated an allegorical explanation of the Pentateuch. Among the Greeks the most complex symbolist was perhaps the third century anti-Christian mystic, Porphyry, a disciple of Plotinus, the Neo-Platonist. Ere long, Christians discovered a hidden sense in all the Old Testament—a double, sometimes even a triple and quadruple meaning. The consistent assumption of a three-fold significance goes back as far as Origen, who was nearly a contemporary of Porphyry. A century or so later, St. Augustine devoted his acumen and resourcefulness to a reconciliation of the two Testaments, a continuous allegorical linking of Old with New. By this process such episodes as that of David and Bathsheba are invested with a dignity not apparent in the letter. If we skip another two hundred years, we shall see Gregory the Great currently employing the same method as a matter of course. It is to be henceforth the foundation of exegesis. Rabanus Maurus, who lived in the eighth and ninth centuries, expounded the symbolic sense of Exodus, and composed an alphabetical dictionary of the allegories of the whole Bible. The twelfth century Honorius of Autun wrote a *Mirror of the Church*, which was a handbook of sermons, made up largely of allegorical interpretation of Bible passages (and also of pagan

myths) with a view to their moral lessons. His contemporary, Hugo of St. Victor, in his *Mystic Noah's Ark*, shows us the Ark as a symbol of the Church and the people of God. For him, all Scripture is symbolical, and so are the sacraments. He workt out an allegorical interpretation of the whole universe. Finally St. Thomas, in the thirteenth century, gives us a clear discussion of the scope and method of allegorical explanation.

If we consider the writings of these and other authors, we shall find that there were two different processes, for the most part used indifferently by the same expounder. In the one, concrete things were taken as symbols of abstract concepts; for instance, the four letters of the name *Adam* indicate that the descendants of the first man shall occupy the four regions of the earth and that the elect shall be gathered from the four winds. In the other, real persons and events of the Old Testament were understood as foreshadowings of the New; Joshua and Samson, for example, both prefigure Jesus, and the incidents of their career, while historically true, stand for episodes in his activity. Following a suggestion of St. Paul, a detailed correspondence was evolved between Adam and Christ, who, by the way, was often called the Second Adam. Such methods have not yet gone entirely out of vogue. In modern times a somewhat similar mode has been ingeniously followed by Swedenborg.

The Church service is and always has been profoundly symbolic. Its mystic significance was first clearly set

forth by Origen. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the symbolism of the Mass was greatly elaborated. A certain Guilelmus Durandus, of the latter century, composed a full explanation of divine offices; for instance, the seven lights carried before a bishop on the principal festivals represent, according to him, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. An allegorical meaning was given to all the parts of a church. Gothic ornamentation came to be as full of symbolism as the Latin hymns.

Medieval scholars, as we have seen, carried the mystic method into their study of biology, mineralogy, and arithmetic, and even extended its application to secular history. The strange significance of numbers, particularly those down to sixteen, was discust by St. Augustine, St. Isidore, Rabanus Maurus, Hugo of St. Victor, and many others; Dante, in the *New Life*, has a word to say on the subject, telling why the number nine is persistently and mysteriously attacht to incidents in the life of Beatrice. The symbolism of beast lore goes back to a Greek allegorized treatise on natural history called the *Physiologus* (mentioned in Chapter IX), which was used by Origen and seems to have been known, in some form, to St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome. It was turned into many languages—into Latin as early as the beginning of the fifth century. Here is a small specimen of its manner: the lion, to escape from hunters, obliterates its tracks with its tail; this signifies that God became man secretly, to deceive the devil.

In the fourth book of his *Convivio* Dante (as we ob-

served in Chapter II) discusses Nobility and its manifestations at the various stages of human life. By way of illustration he expounds the symbolism of the career of Martia, wife of Cato of Utica, as told by "that great poet Lucan in the second book of his *Pharsalia*, when he says that Martia returned to Cato and askt and besought him to take her back."

And by this Martia is meant the noble Soul; and thus may the figure be brought back to truth. Martia was a virgin, and in that state signifieth *Adolescence;* then came she to Cato, and in that state signifieth *Youth*. Then bare she children, by whom are signified the virtues which we have declared to befit young men. And she left Cato and wedded Hortensius, which signifieth that Youth departed and *Maturity* came. And she bare children even unto him, by whom are signified the virtues which we have declared to befit Maturity. Hortensius did die, which signifieth the end of Maturity; and Martia, being now a widow (by which widowhood is meant *Old Age*), did return at the beginning of her widowhood to Cato, which signifieth the return of the noble Soul to God at the beginning of Old Age. And what earthly man was more worthy than Cato to signify God? Surely none. And what saith Martia to Cato? . . . "Grant me at least that in this great life I be called thine" . . . O luckless and ill-born creatures, ye who will rather depart from this life under the name of Hortensius than under that of Cato!

St. Augustine tells us that whatsoever in the divine word cannot be referred to pure conduct or true faith is to be taken figuratively. His Exposition of the Revelation of St. John begins thus:

In reading the revelation of St. John the Apostle, dearest brethren, we have taken heed and have sought, under his bountiful guidance, to explain according to analogy; for the revelation of Jesus Christ is bestowed upon our ears, that heavenly secrets may be manifest to our hearts.

Here are examples from Rev. i, 13, 14, 15:

Girt about the paps with a golden girdle. He did represent Christ our Lord. Understand the two paps as the two Testaments, which derive from the bosom of our Saviour as from a perennial fount, that they may nourish the Christian people for eternal life. But the golden girdle is the choir or multitude of saints; for as the bosom is clasped by a strap, so the multitude of saints clingeth to Christ, and embraceth the two Testaments as two breasts, to be fed from them as from sacred udders.—*And his head and hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.* He nameth "white hairs" the throng of the whitened, namely, the neophytes issuing from baptism. He doth make mention of wool because they are the sheep of Christ. He maketh mention of snow because, even as snow cometh down from heaven, so the grace of baptism cometh without being earned by previous merit.—*And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.* By the fiery feet is meant the Church, which, as the judgment day shall approach, is to be tried by excessive tribulations and tested by fire. And as the foot is the last part of the body, he calleth the feet fiery; for by the feet is meant the Church of the last age, to be tested by many trials, like unto gold in a furnace.

St. Thomas plainly distinguishes four kinds of interpretation:

The nature of man requireth that he attain unto the things of the intellect through the things of the senses, inasmuch as our knowledge hath its beginning in the senses. It was therefore most fitting that the Holy Writ should transmit to us spiritual things under bodily images. . . . Revelation is in no wise altered by the corporeal figures wherewith it is clothed. . . . Beneath these emblems it keepeth all its truth; for it lifteth up the inspired authors, and thereby also them that read, beyond the images even to the idea of the things of the intellect. That which in one passage is presented metaphorically, the Writ expoundeth elsewhere openly, literally, without veil or figure. . . . The author of the Holy Writ, God, may give a meaning not only to locutions, but to things themselves. Thus, even as in the books of men words signify things, likewise in divine books do the very things exprest by words signify other things. The first signification, according to which words denote things, is the first sense, the historical or literal; and the second signification, whereby the things exprest by words designate other things, is the spiritual sense, which taketh for granted the literal sense and reposeth upon it. The spiritual sense is subdivided into three other senses, in this wise: the ancient law is, as St. Paul declareth . . . , the token of the new law; the new law itself, according to the Arcopagite, prefigureth the glory of the future world; moreover it giveth us in the acts of our divine Leader a pattern and rule for our own behavior. Now the things of the old law signifying the things of the new is the allegorical sense; the acts of the divine model representing what we must do is the moral sense; finally, the institutions of the present symbolizing future glory is the anagogical sense. Inasmuch as the literal sense is the one with which the author of any writing is prin-

cipally concerned; and inasmuch as the Author of the Scriptures embraceth all things at once in his intelligence, why should not the same sacred letter . . . contain several senses founded on the literal? . . . The multiplicity of senses in the Writ produceth neither obscurity nor ambiguity; for these senses are multiple . . . not because the words have several meanings, but because the things exprest by the words are themselves the expression of other things. Therefore is there no confusion in the sacred books: all the senses rest upon one, namely, the literal, which alone hath the privilege of furnishing arguments to science; for none are derived . . . from the allegorical sense. . . . The literal sense can contain no error.

Four senses, then: the literal, and the allegorical, moral, and anagogical—the last three being all spiritual.

In explaining the present impotence of mankind to resist temptation, Dante, attributing this helplessness to the lack of temporal guidance, uses these words:

> The law exists, but who takes charge of it?
> No one! For he who walks before the herd
> May chew the cud, but hath his hoofs unsplit.
> [*Purgatory*, XVI.]

To understand this enigmatical passage, one must bear in mind St. Thomas's exposition of Leviticus xi, 3: "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat." Of this ancient precept, still observed by the Jews, Aquinas gives a cryptic explanation: "The *cleft hoof* signifieth the distinction of the two Testaments, or of the Father and the Son, or of the two natures in Christ, or

the discrimination between good and evil. *Chewing the cud* signifieth meditation on the Scriptures and sound understanding thereof." Our poet evidently adopts the last interpretation of the cloven foot, "discrimination between good and evil." "He who walks before the herd," then, (namely, the Pope) may be competent to study and expound the Bible, but is not a safe director of worldly affairs, because in practical life he does not know how to distinguish right from wrong. This faculty belongs to the Emperor, whose place the Pope has usurpt; and mankind is left without trustworthy secular government.

Let us borrow from the *Divine Comedy* one more illustration. In the Garden of Eden, Dante beholds a series of strange phenomena symbolizing the vicissitudes of the Christian Church. The Church itself appears as a chariot, which suffers various injuries and transformations.

> I next saw leaping on the hollow seat
> Of that triumphal car a fox, that lookt
> As if it ne'er had tasted wholesome meat.
>
> [*Purgatory*, XXXII.]

The clue to this riddle we must seek in the Song of Solomon, which, from the earliest times, has been interpreted as an epithalamium of Christ and the Church. Chapter ii, verse 15, gives us the text: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines." Now one of the first Biblical commentators, Origen, offers three

explanations (as was his habit): one literal, one moral, one spiritual; and in the spiritual sense the foxes signify heresies distracting the Church. This conjecture of Origen's was followed by later authorities and became traditional. The onslaught of Dante's fox means, therefore, the assault of heresy upon orthodox Christianity. Heresy has never fed on true doctrine, the "bread of the angels." Happily its attack is repulst by Beatrice, who symbolizes Revelation.

An allegorical habit of interpretation leads to the production of allegory. Patterns enough are to be found in the Bible itself, whose language is strongly imbued with symbolism. Genuine allegorical figures are to be found also in pagan poetry and sculpture: for instance, Fame, Victory, Love. Such models doubtless facilitated the passage from exegesis to creation. In Boethius's great work, Philosophy appears as a mystic lady of wondrous beauty. The study of fables may have contributed something to the movement; for in the apolog an animal regularly stands for a type of man. A series of forty-two fables on the Æsopic plan, written by Avianus in the fourth century, was widely diffused as a text-book. Under school influence was produced, in the first half of the same century, Martianus Capella's curious, often grotesque, allegorical cyclopedia called *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology*, in which is found the first definition of the seven liberal arts. Let us glance rapidly at a few of Martianus's medieval followers. In the eleventh century lived, near Milan, Anselm the Peripatetic, whose

Rhetorimachia narrates a dream. The author is in Heaven, surrounded by saintly souls, when three virgins appear, figures quite different from the elect, and reproach him for forsaking them. Thereupon the embraces of his holy companions seem to him cold. Vainly does the blessed throng claim him: the maidens, declaring him their fosterling, carry him away. Their names are Dialectic, Rhetoric, Grammar.—One of the great scholars of the learned twelfth century was Alanus de Insulis, or Alain de Lille, who lived to be nearly a hundred. His *Nature's Lament*, a pretty fantasy in mingled prose and verse, shows us Nature personified, the vice-regent of God. In his *Anticlaudian*, an allegorical poem on man, there is one feature that reminds us of the *Divine Comedy*: Prudence, on her heavenward journey, is guided for some distance by Reason, but at a certain point yields the leadership to Theology, just as Dante's Virgil gives way to Beatrice. The preceding works are in Latin. *The Battle of the Seven Arts* is a thirteenth-century French poem by Henri d'Andeli, describing the warfare between the Universities of Paris and Orléans, the former a stronghold of logic, the latter a refuge of grammar.

Among allegorical creations a foremost place belongs to the wonderful stone carvings and stained glass windows of the churches. Very significant, too, are the allegorical visions of holy men and women—especially women, such as the saintly Hildegard of Bingen, who lived in the twelfth century. It was in religion that

symbolism first attained full growth. An early example of conscious, systematic Christian allegory is offered by St. Augustine's little tract *On the Dispute of Church and Synagog*. Here each participant in the dialog recites her merits and boasts of her superiority. Synagog declares that all the prophets came to her; Church retorts that Synagog never understood them. Finally Synagog acknowledges her defeat, and Church proclaims her "damned by her own sword, condemned by her own prophet." Such discussions between personified abstractions, or between beasts or inanimate things, became, in the following centuries, a favorite variety of didactic literature. Debates abounded between Body and Soul, between Wine and Water, between Winter and Summer.

In the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius we meet a much more elaborate type. Prudentius, who lived in the second half of the fourth century, was nearly a contemporary of St. Augustine. The *Psychomachia* is a Latin poem of 915 verses, which, after a Preface in shorter lines, proceeds in hexameters. The subject is a battle of the Vices against the Virtues—of Idolatry against Faith, of Anger against Patience, of Luxury against Sobriety, and so on. The descriptions are profuse and the speeches pitilessly long-winded. First upon the field of doubtful contest is Faith, rustic, unkempt, in her eagerness for the fray forgetful of defence. For her the cruel monster Idolatry is no match: after a brief conflict it succumbs, to the boundless delight of an army of onlooking martyrs. Next comes Modesty in

bright array, and, to oppose her, Lust, wrapt in foul fumes. Modesty, with a lengthy harangue, cuts the throat of Lust; then, rejoicing in her victory, cleanses her sword in the Jordan. Lo! humble Patience, grave-faced, unmoved amid battle and tumult; and Wrath, hot bubbling, with frothy laugh and bloodshot eyes. This time the speech is short, the combat long. The breast of Wrath is at last pierced with a hot wound by Patience, who thereupon makes amends for her previous brevity. Job, who has stood by her, is bidden to desist from war. Prancing on an unbridled steed covered with a lion's skin comes Pride, assisted by Wealth. With many words she ridicules the Virtues: Justice and Honesty, she declares, are always poor, Sobriety is barren, Fasting is pale, Shame is feeble. Then, rushing headlong to the fight, she falls ignominiously into a ditch. At this point, Faith, with an appropriate homily, flies to Heaven. The war, however, is not yet over. With flowing hair, roving eyes, and languid voice, Luxury drives to the front in a fine chariot. Comes to meet her Sobriety, bearing the Cross as a standard. After the usual protracted address, Sobriety strikes her adversary from the chariot and slays her. Ere Luxury dies, a stone flies up and hits her in the mouth, making her swallow teeth, tongue, and quantities of blood, all of which she then vomits forth together with melted bones. The next contestants are Avarice and Reason. Peace closes the fight, and Concord gives the signal to carry the victorious ensigns back to camp,

Such a narrative as the foregoing suggests a pageant. Of the pageantry connected with Church service, and its development into drama, we have spoken before. It will be remembered that one of the forms assumed by theatrical art was the morality, or allegorical play, which has a certain affinity with the poem of Prudentius. Pageants, religious and secular, fostered the taste for symbolism, and left their impress upon literature. Very pageant-like is the Ladies' Battle described in a Provençal poem called the *Carros*, or *Chariot*, by Raimbaut de Vaqueiras. Jealous of the surpassing beauty of Lady Beatrice, all the dames of the land gather together to wage war upon her. Having built a fortified city, which they call Troy, they equip themselves, and with chariot and bell issue forth in battle array. Single-handed, armed with merit alone, Beatrice defeats them with fearful slaughter, breaks their chariot, and drives the remnant of the host back into Troy. The brief story is told with much sprightly detail, and comprises an enumeration of the bellicose ladies.

In 1283, as we are informed by the chronicler, Giovanni Villani, the prosperity of Florence was celebrated by a company of more than a thousand men who held sports for two months, all drest in white and led by a gentleman called Lord of Love. The popularity of allegorical processions and spectacles continued through the Renaissance. We are all familiar with the recent curious revival of the historical pageant. An excellent piece of religious pageantry is exhibited in Dante's description of the pro-

cession of the Church, which he beholds in the Garden of Eden. First a vague, sweet sound pervades the air, and a mysterious light permeates the forest. Little by little, as the band approaches, the music reveals itself as a sacred song and the gleam is seen to emanate from seven golden candlesticks, which proceed abreast at the head of the procession. After each candle trails a long horizontal pennant of light; and these streamers, being all of different tints, form a rainbow canopy above the troop that follows. The candlesticks represent the Sevenfold Spirit of God; the colored streaks, the Gifts of the Spirit of the Lord. Beneath these, typifying the Books of the Old Testament, march twenty-four Elders, clad in white (the hue of faith) and crowned with lilies. After them comes the Chariot of the Church, with the Cross for a pole, drawn by Christ in the form of a Griffin —the mystic creature that unites in one body the sky-dwelling eagle and the earthly lion. At this point the procession, being itself in the shape of a cross, spreads out laterally: for beside the right wheel of the Chariot dance the three Christian Virtues, Faith, Hope, and Love; beside the left, the four Cardinal Virtues, Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude. Surrounding the Chariot and the Griffin are four winged Animals, like those described by Ezekiel and St. John, all garlanded with green, the color of hope; these are the Gospels. The seven figures that close the procession are drest like the twenty-four Elders, save that their wreaths are of red flowers (love), instead of white. Two of them —one

resembling a physician, the other armed with a sword—stand for the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul; four of humble mien represent the minor Epistles; at the end, a solitary Old Man, asleep, with a look of wisdom in his face, is the Revelation of St. John. The company halts before Dante. In the midst of a quick responsive service, a hundred angels rise up in the Chariot, and fill the air with lilies. Amidst this rain of flowers Beatrice appears—Revelation, guide of the Church—and Dante, ere he sees her face, recognizes her by the great love that stirs his heart.

Sometimes have I beheld, at break of day,
The eastern sky infused with rosy hue
And all the rest in spotless clear array;
Up came the sun behind a screen of dew,
And long mine eyes his aspect could sustain,
Because the vapors softly veiled the view.
Thus dimly thro' a flowery cloud—a rain
Which upward from angelic fingers came
And fell beside and eke within the wain—
Her white veil garlanded with olive frame,
A lady stood revealed, with cloak of green
Above a garment red as living flame.

[*Purgatory*, XXX.]

Even more abundant is the allegory of Petrarch's *Trionfi*, also a literary pageant. Here, however, we meet troops of real people, with some of whom the author converses; and the poet himself, with his love for Laura, plays a conspicuous part. Sleeping, one fair

summer's day, in a field in Vaucluse, he beholds Love on a triumphal car drawn by four white horses, countless mortals in his train. Chastity, however, vanquishes the god, and, accompanied by the virtuous, leads him in chains to the Temple of Modesty. The conqueror in turn is conquered: Chastity succumbs to Death; Laura, after her victory over love, falls a prey to pestilence. Her glory survives nevertheless; Fame triumphs over Death. After Fame flock the heroes and heroines of olden times and many lands, the great writers and scholars of Greece and Rome. But even Fame cannot withstand Time, whose triumph follows next. In the end Eternity triumphs over all.

Love became of all allegorical figures the most popular. As we should have expected, it was in southern France that the conventional fiction of a Court of Love first developt. The earliest treatment of this theme is found in a poem by Guiraut de Calanso, written about 1200. The goddess Love, says the poet, conquers princes, counts, and kings. She follows not reason, but her own will, and in her court is no righteous judgment. Subtle, swift, unerring, she can be neither seen nor escaped. With a steel dart she first inflicts a wound of pleasure; then she shoots golden arrows and a sharp leaden bolt. All fear her. Tho blind, she never misses her aim. Lightly and softly she flies to strike her victim. Born of delight, she lives on joy. The harm she does seems like good. She considers neither rank nor wealth. A gold crown symbolizes her sovereignty. Her

palace has five doors; whosoever can open two of them easily passes the other three, but he can never more issue forth. There he dwells in gladness. The approach is by four easy steps. The discourteous, however, cannot enter, but must abide without in the suburb, which contains more than half of the world. On the terrace is a wonderful gaming-board, on which every conceivable game can be played; it has a thousand men, all of glass and easily shattered; and he who breaks one, loses his match. She is served over all land and sea. She lifts up and casts down, and she takes back what she has fairly promist. Save for a little gold lace, she goes naked. All her relatives spring from one and the same fire. Such is the third part of Love—the carnal type. The second part (elsewhere called "natural," or familial) possesses freedom and mercy; the first (celestial) has wealth above the sky. The mysterious little poem has only 54 lines. A rimed commentary on it, in 947 verses, was composed some eighty years later by Guiraut Riquier.

The personification of Love, familiar from ancient times through Ovid, became a regular feature of Provençal amatory verse, and of the French and Italian lyrics that followed it. Thirty or more years after Guiraut de Calanso came the most famous love allegory of all literature, the French *Roman de la Rose*, discust in a previous chapter. From that time on, allegory was king of poetry.

We have noted an Italian adaptation of the *Roman de la Rose*, a sonnet sequence so clever that some have as-

cribed it to Dante. Let us look now at an original allegorical and didactic composition (a sort of medieval gentleman's manual) by an Italian—the *Tesoretto*, written not far from the time of Dante's birth by Brunetto Latini, who became the kindly counselor of the youthful poet. His soul appears to his former pupil in Hell, punisht for an ignoble vice that had dishonored his illustrious life. Dante, with Virgil, is walking on a dike across a sandy plain upon which descends a rain of fire. Suddenly he encounters a troop of spirits marching beside the bank, and each one of them stares at him "as people are wont to stare at one another in the evening under a new moon," knitting their brows, as an elderly tailor does when he is trying to find the needle's eye.

When all the group were staring thus at me,
One knew me, seized my garment's hem, amazed,
And loudly cried: "What marvel do I see?"
And I, the while his arm the spirit raised,
Bent fast mine eyes upon his visage sear
Until the scorchèd face whereon I gazed
Became at once to recognition clear;
And, seeking with my hand those features wan,
I answered: "You, Master Brunetto, here!"
And he replied: "Be not displeased, my son,
If old Latini follows thee a bit,
And backward turns, and lets the band go on."
. . . . . .
"If favoring Heaven on all my wishes smiled,"
I answered him, "I earnestly would pray
You were not yet from human life exiled.

For memory, now a sorrow, keeps alway
Your kindly image, dear and fatherly,
When in the world above, from day to day,
You taught me how to win eternity.
How great my gratitude, while I shall live,
'T is meet my words make all mankind to see."

[*Hell*, XV.]

This Brunetto, a Guelf of Florence, was born about 1220. Being a notary and an eminent man of law, he was sent in 1260 to Alfonso X of Castile to ask for help against Manfred. In his absence the dreaded disaster came. The news of Montaperti reacht him on his homeward journey. The Guelfs had fled to Lucca; but he turned his steps to Paris, where he made his home and pursued his legal calling. There, no doubt, he became acquainted with the first part of the *Roman de la Rose*, but he probably never saw the second, by Jean de Meung. He remained in France until the battle of Benevento in 1266. Returning home after that event, he held several important offices in his native city (where he also became in 1270 a partner in an apothecary's business) and was held in high esteem until the time of his death, about 1293. Among his literary legacies is a didactic epistle on the duties of friendship, entitled the *Favolello*. Of his great encyclopedic *Trésor* we have spoken before (near the beginning of Chapter VI). The work that concerns us now is the so-called "Little Treasure," a poem in short couplets. It begins with the sad tidings that met him on his way home from Castile. Brooding over the defeat

of his party, he loses his way (as Dante afterwards did) in a strange wood. On his return to his senses, he encounters Dame Nature, whose beauty kindles his admiration; from her he receives much instruction. Passing next through a wilderness, he emerges into a lovely plain. Here are emperors, kings, and scholars, and Empress of them all is Virtue; under her, as Queens, reign the four Cardinal Virtues, whose palaces he visits. But he is not content. Yearning for love and happiness, he goes on until he reaches a flowery meadow, ever changing, peopled with dwellers gay and sad. In their midst Pleasure sits enthroned, a winged youth, who is forever shooting arrows into the throng. Four ladies round about him rule the crowd: Fear, Longing, Love, Hope. In this place is expounded the theory of love, and the poet falls under its sway. Rescued from this perilous situation by Ovid, he proceeds to do penance; and, purified, abandoning the search for happiness, he returns to the wood to seek the seven Liberal Arts. Other regions are traverst; on and on he rides until he scales the summit of Olympus, where he meets Ptolemy, master of astronomy and philosophy, a reverend, white-bearded figure, who surely would have given bounteous answer to the poet's questions, had not the narrative been interrupted at this point.

Shortly before 1300 was composed the *Intelligenza*, an allegorical description and laudation of Universal Intelligence and her court, by that public-spirited Florentine citizen and vivid chronicler, Dino Compagni. Passing

over Dante, we come to Chaucer's *House of Fame*, which need not be described here. Another famous allegory of the fourteenth century is Boccaccio's *Ninfale d'Ameto*, a strange blend of pastoral, story-telling, and religious symbolism; the last element, indeed, curiously out of keeping with the sensuous descriptions and the coarseness of some of the tales, seems almost like an afterthought. We have already toucht upon Petrarch's *Triumphs*, which bring us to the edge of the Renaissance.

Reduced from a spontaneous mode of expression to a conscious literary device, sustained symbolism remained in favor through the period of the New Birth, and with diminishing success has survived to our own day. In modern times it seems more effective in art—especially in sculpture—than in poetry.

Allegory is essentially a systematic expression of the intangible in terms of the tangible, a methodical portrayal of something abstract, spiritual, or future in the form of something concrete, material, and present. Mere change of names does not make allegory. Mr. Smith may be called Mr. Brown without becoming a symbol. *Pantagruel*, *Astrée*, *le Grand Cyrus* are none the more allegorical for concealing real people behind some of their fanciful appellations. Neither does it suffice to depict typical characters rather than individuals, even when each personage is reduced almost to a single characteristic, as often happens in Balzac and Dickens, in Hugo and Zola. With these authors, however, we are not far from the verge. Label old Grandet "Avarice,"

Micawber "Irresponsibility," Javert "Law," or Nana "Flesh," and we shall not be so remote from *Everyman*. But as long as the author conceives and the reader accepts the character as a typical case, not as a collective image, we remain in the realm of literalness.

To be fully effective, an allegory must be patent, it must suggest something more than a plain statement could convey, and it must be so constructed that the literal and the symbolic meaning, while each pursues a coherent and intelligible course, are connected by an inner necessity. Nothing is more exasperating or more puerile than an attempted allegory in which the relation of reality to emblem seems arbitrary and external. This is the defect of much latter-day Symbolism. Impenetrable until a key is provided, it reveals itself as trivial the moment the door is opened. In Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell*, to be sure, the general moral of the fable is clear enough and of grave import, but in detail it is impossible for the layman to distinguish mysteriously impressive symbols from dainty but insignificant bits of folklore. We should miss nothing in Ibsen's *Wild Duck* if the title-giving fowl were omitted altogether. Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* would have been more consistent, and even more enjoyable than it is, had it eschewed allegory and followed its original bent as a simple fairy play. Even such a great work as Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, with all its loveliness, can hardly be deemed successful as an allegory; for surely scarce a reader would have guest aright the hidden purpose, had not the poet revealed it

elsewhere. We may say the same of Tennyson's imitation of Spenser's method in the *Idyls of the King*. In the medieval *Roman de la Rose* we encounter, naturally enough, the opposite fault: the symbolic sense (in the narrative part of the poem) absorbs all our interest, the literal story being too infantile to hold our attention.

In the Middle Ages, as we have seen, symbolism was something more than an artistic device: it represented a habit of mind, a belief in mystic correspondences. It was not by accident that this period produced the greatest exponent of the style. Yet another master, and a mighty one, lived many centuries later. Bunyan is probably second only to Dante. *Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Divine Comedy* admirably illustrate two different types of allegory: the one starts with an abstract concept and gives it a semblance of material form; the other takes something real and makes it stand for the quality it exemplifies. The first method, to portray despair, creates a giant on whom it bestows that name; the second borrows the classical figure of Medusa. One begets a character called Arrogancy; the other, to embody that vice, introduces an arrogant Florentine, Filippo Argenti, notorious for his unbridled temper. On the stage, where the personages stand before us in flesh and blood, their appellations matter but little, and the two methods may be equally effective. In non-dramatic literature, however, the difference between the two is noteworthy, the second offering far better opportunities for vividness and illusion. Had Dante been a symbolist of the same kind

as Bunyan, he would not have told his story in the first person; the hero would have been a shadowy Christian. Lost in Worldly Wood, and attempting to climb the Mountain of Righteousness, he would have been obstructed, not by a leopard, a lion, and a wolf, but by three monsters called, perhaps, Immoderateness, Violence, and Deceit; and Mr. Reason, not Virgil, would have come to his aid. As keeper of Purgatory we should find, not Cato, but Mr. Free Will; Matilda, the lovely guardian of the Earthly Paradise, would doubtless have been Mistress Innocence; Beatrice, the heavenly guide, might have appeared as Mistress Godsmessage, and St. Bernard, the type of contemplation, as Brother Godseeing. We should be loath to see the alluring musician, Casella, supplanted by Turnabout, or the lazy Belacqua by Ready-to-halt.

Dante himself expounds the principles of allegory in the *Convivio*, II, i:

> Exposition must be *literal* and *allegorical*. And for the understanding of this you should know that writings can be understood and must be explained, for the most part, in four senses. One is called *literal;* and this is the one which extendeth not beyond the letter itself. The next is called *allegorical;* and this is the one which is hidden beneath the cloak of these fables, being a truth concealed under pretty fiction: as when Ovid saith that Orpheus with his lyre tamed wild beasts and drew to him trees and stones, meaning that the wise man with the instrument of his voice doth tame and humble cruel hearts, and draweth to his will those that have no life of knowledge or art, inasmuch as they that have no rational existence are

even as stones. . . . Theologians, to be sure, take this sense otherwise than poets; but forasmuch as my intention is to follow here the fashion of poets, I shall take the allegorical sense as the poets use it.

In theological exposition the literal sense is true, as well as the allegorical; in poetry only the second need be veracious.

The third sense is called *moral;* and this is the one which readers must ever diligently observe in writings, for their own profit and for that of their pupils: as we may observe in the Gospel that when Christ went up on the mountain to be transfigured, of the twelve Apostles he took with him but three; whence we may draw the moral that in very secret things we should have small company. The fourth sense is called *anagogical,* or supersensual; and this is when we expound spiritually a writing which, even in the letter, through the very things exprest expresseth things concerning eternal glory: as may be seen in that song of the Prophet which saith that when Israel went out of Egypt, Judah became holy and free; which, altho it be manifestly true according to the letter, is not less true in its spiritual meaning, namely, that when the soul goeth out of sin, it becometh holy and free in its own power. And in such interpretation the literal sense must come first, being the one which compriseth the others in its significance, and without which the study of the others would be impossible and irrational.

It will be noted that these definitions are essentially identical with those of St. Thomas, though less clearly phrased, Aquinas's point of view being purely that of

the interpreter, Dante's inevitably that of expounder and poet combined.

The subject is resumed in another work attributed to Dante (and probably his), that Latin letter addrest to Can Grande della Scala, mightiest of the poet's noble patrons, which was described in Chapter III. To him, it may be remembered, Dante is said to have dedicated his *Paradise*, the third and last part of the *Divine Comedy;* to him he sends, with this introductory and explanatory epistle, the first canto of that same *Paradiso.* Taking as an illustration the passage from the Psalms that was cited in the *Convivio*—"When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion"—he develops its fourfold sense.

> For if we look at the *letter* alone, we are told of the going forth of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses; if we look at the *allegory*, we are told of our future redemption through Christ; if we consider the *moral* sense, we are told of the conversion of the soul from the grief and misery of sin to the state of grace; if we consider the *anagogical*, we are told of the going forth of the blessed soul from the servitude of this corruption to the freedom of eternal glory.

Dante then applies these principles to the definition of the *Comedy;* but here, as always in expounding his own work, only the first two senses are taken into account.

> The subject of the whole work, in its merely literal acceptation, is the state of souls after death, taken simply; for on

and about it turns the course of the whole work. But if the work be taken allegorically, the subject is Man, and how in the exercise of his free will he exposeth himself by his merits and demerits to the rewards and penalties of Justice.

The good and the evil life of mankind on earth is, then, the "allegorical and true" theme of the *Commedia*. Our author, we see, is not in the position of those poets criticized in the *Vita Nuova*, XXV, who "have no reason in them for what they say. For it would be a great shame to a man who should rime aught under the cloak of a figure or metaphor, and then, being askt, should not have the wit to strip the cloak from his words in such wise that they should have a real meaning. And this first friend of mine and I know well of some which do rime thus foolishly." Inasmuch as the "first friend" is Guido Cavalcanti, we have, in this passage, the rare luck to catch a glimpse of two great masters comparing notes on literature, discussing principles and judging other craftsmen.

Before taking leave of the Epistle to Can Grande, we must listen to the poet's curious explanation of the name of his masterpiece. We shall see that in the interval between *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, examined in Chapter V, and the present Epistle, the author had been obliged to take account of something more than a stylistic difference between comedy and tragedy.

The title of the book is "the Comedy of Dante Alighieri, a Florentine by birth but not in character"; for the understand-

ing of which you must know that *comedy* is so called from *comus*, a village, and *oda*, which is a song; wherefore comedy is so to speak a *village song*. And comedy is a certain kind of poetic narration different from all others. For it differeth from tragedy in its subject, in that tragedy at the beginning is beauteous and calm, but at the end or close is noisome and horrible; and therefore is it called from *tragus*, which is a goat, and *oda*, as it were a goat song, or noisome after the fashion of a goat, as is evident in Seneca his tragedies. Comedy on the other hand beginneth the harshness of some matter, but its subject endeth happily, as is evident in Terence his comedies. . . . Wherefore is it clear that the name of the present work is Comedy. For if we look at its subject, in the beginning it is horrible and noisome, being Hell; at the end, happy, desirable, and grateful, being Paradise. If we consider the fashion of the speech, it is a meek and humble fashion, being the vulgar tongue, in which even females communicate.

CHAPTER XII

THE MEDIEVAL TEMPER

WITH its dominant religious bent, inclining it to regard earthly existence as a brief prelude to eternal life; with its scanty, distorted record of the past; with its total ignorance of the basic principles of nature, as we understand them—it is not surprising that the medieval mind pictured the world as essentially unchanging. Not only would the doctrine of evolution, in any form, have appeared to it inexpressibly absurd and shocking; even the general conception of progress, here or hereafter, would have past its comprehension. The idea of constant advancement is so dear to us, and so fundamental a part of all our thought, that we can scarcely imagine a race of men devoid of it. Yet the notion is really of very recent origin, one of the late fruits of the Renaissance, which did not come to full maturity until the time of the French Revolution. The ancients dreamed of a Golden Age in the past, not in the future, and thought of their own generation as declining rather than ascending. The Middle Ages—more "middle" in this respect than in any other—believed in neither continuous rise nor con-

tinuous fall. The universe came into being, once for all, by a single act of God's will. Man was created, once for all, such as he is now. He fell, once for all, with Adam; he was redeemed, once for all, by Christ, and his freedom of will was restored, with grace. On the Judgment Day life on earth shall cease forever, and existence in Heaven above and Hell below shall go on immutable through all eternity. Purgatory, the only progressive state, begins with the Redemption and ends with the Judgment. It is, by the way, the atmosphere of hope, of betterment, of upward tendency that makes Dante's *Purgatorio* so congenial to the modern reader—far more acceptable, tho perhaps less impressive, than his *Inferno* or his *Paradiso*. A condition of everlasting, fruitless torture is as abhorrent to our modern reason as to our modern sensibility. But scarcely less repellent is the idea of an eternity of unaspiring perfection. To be moving is for us the essential thing. If possible, we prefer to be moving in the right direction; but anything is better than immobility. We value the approach, not the attainment. Dante's Hell, with its picturesque gruesomeness, its dramatic vitality, its manifest symbolism, is sure to fascinate even the most skeptical of present-day readers. But to comprehend in all its grandeur his Paradise, even the most faithful must make an effort. Our inbred modern restlessness must for the moment, at least, be subdued; we must try to appreciate the meaning of quiescent, receptive enjoyment. Our jealous individualism must yield sufficiently to allow us

a glimpse of the supreme bliss of self-surrender, of the merging of our own volition—so infinite from our standpoint, so insignificant when viewed from afar—in the universal Will of the loved and loving Father.

In a stable universe, eternally conceived by Divine Intelligence, realized by Divine Power, moved by Divine Love, there can be no question of relative standards. Truth is truth, goodness is goodness, beauty is beauty, now as in the beginning and at the end. In the *Vita Nuova*, Dante, defending his employment of personification as an artistic device, argues, first, that in the society of his day such rimesters as himself correspond to the poets of ancient times; second, that the Greek and Latin poets resorted to this figure; consequently, that it may be used by contemporary authors. This attitude of mind prevailed, indeed, until the recent days of Madame de Staël. She it was that first imprest upon the general consciousness of Europe the effect of time and place on ethical and esthetic values. Her lesson has by her successors been taught so well that we have now almost reacht the conclusion that nothing is permanently right or wrong. What seems to any man, at any given moment, probable, seemly, or attractive is for that man, at that moment, true, good, or beautiful; and beyond that we cannot go. Any attempt at generalization results in purely arbitrary distinctions, worthless except for the dogmatist who makes them—perhaps even for him. This plain statement of our current impressionistic doctrine seems almost like a *reductio ad absurdum;* but in

reality it is not absurd enough to describe the uncritical attitude which we take for open-mindedness. The philosophy *à la mode* would have appeared to St. Thomas like a puppy that runs after every stranger it meets, thinking it may have found its master. Every uncouth thing that shocks the sense, if it but present itself with due solemnity, we are ready to receive as perhaps representative of the science, religion, or art of the future, no matter how ridiculous, how wicked, how hideous it may look. We have thrown our compass overboard, and are now drifting hither and thither as purposeless as the time-servers in Dante's Infernal Vestibule. Like Celestine V, whose pusillanimous renunciation of the Papacy in 1294 gave the throne to the unscrupulous Boniface VIII, we seem to have made the "great refusal" of responsibility.

Then I beheld a flag that seemed to turn
And dart and run so swiftly to and fro
That rest and respite it appeared to spurn.
And close behind it there did trailing go
So long a train of ghosts, I ne'er had thought
That Death had sent so many here below.
Now when mine eye some likenesses had caught,
That weakling shade I recognized full well
Whose cowardice the great refusal wrought.
Ah! then I knew, and fearlessly may tell,
This was the school of souls irresolute,
Despised by God, despised by fiends of Hell.

[*Hell*, III.]

At the opposite extreme stood the philosophy of the Middle Ages. Truth, once revealed by divine grace or by superior human intelligence, always remained the same. All that we need for our salvation, we find in the Bible, interpreted by the wise Fathers of the Church. For the guidance of our earthly lives, for the comprehension of the world in which we live, for the satisfaction of legitimate curiosity in all temporal things, we have the great sages of the past: Virgil, Cicero, Boethius, and, high above the rest, Aristotle. To these sources we must look for knowledge, not to our own speculation. We shall have a sufficient task for our individual acumen in the understanding of them. The best use to make of our freedom is to subject it to the leadership of recognized authority.

Submissiveness to authority is, in general, one of the characteristic traits of the medieval spirit. It cannot be called an exclusive possession of that period, for it reappears in the Neo-Classic epoch, after the anarchy of the Renaissance; but it is perhaps deeper seated, more unquestioning, in the earlier age. The whole organization of the Church, the whole structure of society, are based on the principle of obedience. In the feudal as in the ecclesiastical hierarchy the first rule is absolute submission to the power above. The primary virtue is humility. In such an atmosphere the communal spirit thrives and the single man is apt to disappear from view. The individual tends to be swallowed up by his social function, retaining scarcely more identity than the bee

that carries its speck of pollen to the hive, or the ant that piles its grain of sand on the hill. An astonishing feature of medieval literature is its anonymity. Only a small portion of the mass of poetry transmitted to us bears the name of an author. The cathedrals, too, those supreme achievements of human art, are mostly of unknown parentage. This is not the case with the age that preceded nor with the one that followed. From classic times we have inherited more writers than works. The annals of the Renaissance bristle with glorious names. The Middle Ages show us only here and there a Chrétien de Troyes, a Chaucer, a Dante. Moreover, the aim of the artist of that day was not to exploit his own peculiarities, but to work like other artists, to express concepts familiar to all in a medium congenial to all. The story-teller made a point of stating whence his story came. If he had no source, he invented one, to escape the damning imputation of novelty. Now and again an author, in spite of all his efforts, could not hold his originality in check. Such a man was Dante. He was taller than the tradition he followed, and could not hide behind it. In his negation of progress, in his worship of authority, he was unreservedly a citizen of his own commonwealth; but the concealment of his towering self was beyond his power. In theory he was in agreement with his contemporaries, and therefore disapproved of speaking of one's own affairs. His spiritual experiences, to be sure, he laid bare for the benefit of his fellow-men; but of his material life he told next to nothing. In all his writings

he gives no information about his parents, except that they spoke Italian, and never mentions his wife nor his children. In one place he does apparently make a vague reference to a sister. Once, too, he allows himself, as we have seen, to introduce his great-great-grandfather, Cacciaguida. Never in the autobiographical *Vita Nuova* does he reveal the identity of his city, his friends, or himself. Only once in the *Commedia* does his name appear, and then he apologizes for the intrusion.

Dante's reticence makes us all the more eager to seize upon every scrap of information that he lets slip. Here and there the *New Life* opens up a faint but fascinating picture:

> One day it came to pass that this most gentle lady was sitting in a place where were heard words concerning the Queen of glory, and I was in a spot from which I beheld my happiness; and midway between her and me, in a straight line, sat a gentle lady of right pleasing countenance, who several times looked at me, wondering at my gaze, which seemed to have its goal in her. Wherefore did many take notice of her look. And so much heed was given thereto that, as I departed from this place, I heard these words behind me: "Behold how such and such a lady doth waste the flesh of this man!" And inasmuch as they told her name, I understood that they spake of her who had been in the straight line which started from the most gentle Beatrice and ended in mine eyes. Then was I greatly comforted, being assured that on that day my secret had been betrayed to no man by my looks. And forthwith I thought to make of this gentle lady a screen of the truth; and so much evidence did I give in a little while that most of those who

discourst of me believed they knew my secret. With this lady did I conceal myself some months and years; and, that men might believe the better, I wrote for her certain little things in rime, which it is not my purpose to copy here.

[*New Life*, v.]

This screen-lady eventually left Florence and went to reside in a distant country. Some time after, "a thing befell which constrained me to depart from the aforesaid city and go toward those parts where was the gentle lady who had been my protection, altho the end of my journey was not so distant as she was. And altho I was outwardly in the company of many, my journey so displeased me that my sighs could scarce vent the anguish which my heart felt, because I was going far away from my happiness"—from Beatrice, who was in Florence (*New Life*, IX). In all probability this journey was a military campaign. On the road Love meets him and bids him take another lady for his screen. Are such scenes as these real reminiscences or are they pure fiction? The plan and purpose of the *Vita Nuova* point to a foundation in fact. This work is essentially an interpretation of Dante's previously publisht poems, an attempt to bring all his early life and literary work into connection with Beatrice, and an apology for those rimes which seem to indicate diversity of interest.

One day the poet was invited by a trusted friend to accompany him to a certain wedding banquet. Neither suspected any harm. But as he entered the house, intent on doing service to the ladies there assembled,

Dante seemed to feel a mysterious quiver start in his breast on the left side and swiftly spread through all parts of his frame:

Then I declare that I did lean my body, dissembling, against a painting which encircled this apartment; and fearing lest others should remark my tremor, I did lift up mine eyes, and, gazing upon the ladies, I beheld among them the most gentle Beatrice. . . . I declare that many of these ladies, becoming aware of my transformation, began to wonder; and, conversing together, they did mock at me with this most gentle one. Whereat my friend, who in good faith had been misled, took me by the hand, and, leading me forth from the sight of these ladies, askt me what ailed me.

[*New Life*, XIV.]

A year after the death of the most gentle Beatrice occurs another incident, which has been made the subject of a famous picture:

On that day on which was completed the year that this lady had become one of the citizens of eternal life, I was sitting in a place where, remembering her, I was drawing an angel on certain tablets. And while I was drawing it, I turned my eyes and saw beside me men to whom it was fitting to do honor. They were looking at that which I was making; and, as I was later informed, they had already been there for some time ere I took heed of them. When I beheld them, I arose and, greeting them, said: "Another was with me just now, and therefore was I thoughtful." And so, when they were gone, I went back to my work of drawing figures of angels.

[*New Life*, XXXV.]

Another feminine figure appears in the emotional record of the *New Life:*

Some time after, being in a place where I was recalling bygone times, I stood right thoughtful and with such painful thoughts as to give me an outward look of fearful dejection. Wherefore I, marking my transformation, lifted mine eyes to see whether anyone was watching me. Then I beheld a gentle lady, right youthful and beauteous, who from a window was looking at me, as it seemed, most compassionately, so that all compassion appeared to be gathered together in her. Wherefore, inasmuch as the unhappy, on seeing sorrow for them in others, are the quicker moved to tears, as if taking pity on themselves, I then felt in mine eyes the beginning of a disposition to weep; and therefore, fearing to reveal my weakness, I departed from the sight of this gentle one. And afterward I said to myself: "It cannot be otherwise than that most noble love is with that compassionate lady."

[*New Life,* XXXVI.]

This kindly young person, whose image for some time threatened to banish the memory of Beatrice, later became the symbol of the poet's temporal comforter, Lady Philosophy, the same mistress who, so long before, had consoled the Roman Boethius in his prison, as was told in Chapter XI.

The *Convivio* contains one brief but intensely pathetic mention of Dante's exile. The author has been making excuse for his unwilling defence of his own conduct:

Ah! would it had pleased the Governor of the universe that no occasion for my excuse had ever been! For then would

others not have sinned against me nor should I unjustly have suffered punishment—the punishment, I mean, of exile and poverty. Ever since it was the pleasure of the citizens of Florence, that most beauteous and famous daughter of Rome, to cast me out of her sweetest bosom (in which I was born and bred up to the middle point of life, and in which, with their good will, I yearn with all my heart to rest my weary mind and to finish my allotted time), through almost all regions over which this language doth extend, I have journeyed, a stranger, almost a beggar, revealing against my will the wound of fortune, for which the blame falleth commonly but unjustly upon the wounded man. Truly have I been a ship without sail or helm, carried to divers ports and inlets and shores by the dry blast which grievous poverty doth blow.

[*Banquet*, I, iii.]

In the *Divine Comedy* a prophecy of this same banishment is put into the mouth of the poet's ancestor, Cacciaguida:

> The things most fondly cherisht here below
> Shall all be left behind, when thou art fled—
> First arrow this of cruel exile's bow.
> And thou shalt taste how salty is the bread
> Of other men, and climbing up and down
> Another's stairs, how hard a path to tread.
>
> [*Paradise*, XVII.]

And near the close of the mighty *Comedy* the outcast allows us to catch one glimpse of the hope he always secretly harbored, a vain hope of return to the Florence he so loved and so upbraided.

If fate ordain my sacred poem here,
Which heaven and earth so amply have supplied
That it hath kept me lean this many a year,
Shall melt the hate that locketh me outside
My pretty fold, where once I slept a lamb
Whom hostile wolves with their devices tried,
With louder voice and fleece of stalwart ram
Returning, on mine own baptismal font
Shall I be crowned a poet, as I am.

[*Paradise*, XXV.]

The habit of modesty is touchingly illustrated by a passage in which Dante's great predecessor in autobiography, St. Augustine, speaks of his grief on the death of his saintly mother (the translation is by J. G. Pilkington):

And I set free the tears which before I repressed, that they might flow at their will, spreading them beneath my heart; and it rested in them, for Thy ears were nigh me,—not those of man, who would have put a scornful interpretation on my weeping. But now in writing I confess it unto Thee, O Lord! Read it who will, and interpret how he will; and if he finds me to have sinned in weeping for my mother during so small a part of an hour,—that mother who was for a while dead to mine eyes, who had for many years wept for me, that I might live in Thine eyes,—let him not laugh at me, but rather, if he be a man of noble charity, let him weep for my sins against Thee, the Father of all the brethren of Thy Christ.

In no respect, perhaps, do medieval writings differ more patently from modern than in their dignified imper-

sonality. Contrast this attitude for a moment with our present-day effusiveness, our pitiful eagerness to disclose, to anyone who will listen, each petty detail of our bodily and spiritual existence. Think of the flood of trivial self-revelation that pours from the lips of the catchpenny scribbler or the sublimated chorus-girl. And some people must care to read these confidences, else they would not be printed: that is the strangest part of it. Such display would once have seemed almost as indecent as walking naked in the street.

If the exhibition of the *ego* was foreign to medieval taste, the observation of self was scarcely less so. Introspection was confined, in the main, to religious experience, where it is legitimate and necessary. The phenomena of love, to be sure, were noted and catalogued by the poets; but one suspects them of drawing more heavily on their libraries than on their own heart-burnings. Petrarch is an exception; but he was half a modern. Psychic reactions to the accidents of life went undescribed and, for the most part, unanalyzed. The comparative absence of self-study accounts in some measure for a lack of conscious enthusiasm over things of beauty, especially the beautiful things in nature. Furthermore, a continuous sense of the unworthiness and brief duration of mundane existence was an obstacle to unbridled admiration of any of its constituents. Beauty, moreover, is seductive, therefore perilous to the soul; the religious instinct warns us against its influence. A conspicuous trait of the medieval mind is the ascetic

temper, which revealed itself not only in the vast spread of monasticism, but also in the ordinary lay Christian's conception of propriety, and which (as we shall presently see) held at least intermittent sway over so progressive and full-blooded a man as Petrarch.

For all these reasons, while esthetic feeling was far from inert, we find allotted to it, in the Middle Ages, a much less conspicuous place than the throne it mounted in the Renaissance. Beauty was the handmaid of utility, of knowledge, of truth. So Dante, greatest of artists tho he was, would probably have defined it. He would scarcely have been willing to admit a worship of comeliness for its own sake. And the charms that appealed to him and his contemporaries were rather those of art than those of nature. Scenery plays an almost negligible part in medieval literature. Books consisting mainly of esthetic portrayal of the looks of things would in the thirteenth century have been inconceivable. In Dante himself the descriptions are always secondary, tho vastly more important than in most of his fellow-craftsmen. For a highly developt pictorial style one must come down to the Renaissance; and the general predominance of the pictorial, so characteristic of nineteenth-century letters, may perhaps be traced to Rousseau and to the nature-writers who were his contemporaries or followers. In medieval times one finds but an occasional great word-painter, like the fourteenth-century Chaucer and Froissart; and the main interest even of such a one was always in the habits of men.

One type of word-picture, to be sure, is frequent in medieval verse: the spring scene, a pretty specimen of which graces the beginning of the *Roman de la Rose.* There is, of course, both a physical and a traditional connection between love and springtime, the mating season; and consequently the amatory poetry of all periods has certain vernal associations. In the Middle Ages the springtide element is generally reduced, in the lyrics, to a conventional, perfunctory mention of trees, flowers, and birds, always in the most general terms, and regularly confined to the opening stanza. Some examples were given in the chapter on Medieval Song.

When nature was enjoyed at all, it was only in her sweet, quiet, sunny aspects. Beetling crag and stormy sea had no attractiveness; they were simply disagreeable, or, if beetling and stormy enough, horrible. Even sunsets left the spectator unmoved. So, at least, it seems from what evidence we possess. We must make allowance for medieval reticence and modern volubility. Our ancestors probably felt more than they exprest, while we, no doubt, express a good deal more than we feel. In our ecstasy over Mont Blanc we must reckon, as a considerable factor, a desire to experience and say the proper thing; we all have in us something of Monsieur Perrichon. Still, there must be a fundamental difference between those times and these; otherwise we could not account for the change of fashion. Outspoken admiration for wild scenery is essentially modern. It came in with the "Gothic" novel, with the cult of the

ballad, with Ossian, with Rousseau's exemplary savage and Chateaubriand's lacrimose Indian. In painting, the Romantic strain first prevailed in the work of Salvator Rosa. Nevertheless, the grander aspects of nature did not absolutely lack devotees before they were consigned to canvas by the Neapolitan artist. As far back as the fourteenth century, Petrarch was once so anachronistic as to climb a mountain to enjoy the view. Before him, Gossuin, whom we have met as author of the thirteenth-century *Image du monde*, climbed Etna, a volcano nearly 11,000 feet high, whose crater and slopes he vividly describes; but we may assume that his interest was mainly scientific. Petrarch's mountain, Mt. Ventoux, in the Rhone valley, not very far from Vaucluse and Avignon, was rather tall and hard, tho now accessible to automobiles when the wind is not overstrong. He tells the story of his adventure in a letter:

To-day I made the ascent of the highest mountain in this region, which is not improperly called Ventosum. My only motive was the wish to see what so great an elevation had to offer. I have had this expedition in mind for many years; for, as you know, I have lived in this region from infancy, having been cast here by the fate which determines the affairs of men. Consequently the mountain, which is visible from a great distance, was ever before mine eyes, and I conceived the plan of some time doing what I have at last accomplished to-day. . . . When I came to look about for a companion I found, strangely enough, that hardly one among my friends seemed suitable, so rarely do we meet with just the right

combination of personal tastes and characteristics, even among those who are dear to us. [Finally he chose his younger brother.] At the time fixed we left the house, and by evening reached Malaucène, which lies at the foot of the mountain to the north. Having rested there a day, we finally made the ascent this morning, with no companions except two servants; and a most difficult task it was. The mountain is a very steep and almost inaccessible mass of stony soil. . . . We found an old shepherd in one of the mountain dales, who tried, at great length, to dissuade us from the ascent, saying that some fifty years before he had, in the same ardour of youth, reached the summit, but had gotten for his pains nothing except fatigue and regret, and clothes and body torn by the rocks and briars. No one, so far as he or his companions knew, had ever tried the ascent before or after him. But his counsels increased rather than diminished our desire to proceed, since youth is suspicious of warnings. . . . Surrendering to him all such garments and other possessions as might prove burdensome to us, we made ready for the ascent, and started off at a good pace. [The poet, however, repeatedly delayed the party by vainly looking for easy ways. At last they reached the summit.] On its top is a little level place, and here we could at last rest our tired bodies. . . . At first, owing to the unaccustomed quality of the air and the effect of the great sweep of view spread out before me, I stood like one dazed. I beheld the clouds under our feet, and what I had read of Athos and Olympus seemed less incredible as I myself witnessed the same things from a mountain of less fame. . . . The Alps, rugged and snow-capped, seemed to rise close by, although they were really at a great distance. . . . Under our very eyes flowed the Rhone. While I was thus dividing my thoughts,

now turning my attention to some terrestrial object that lay before me, now raising my soul, as I had done my body, to higher planes, it occurred to me to look into my copy of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, a gift that I owe to your love, and that I always have about me, in memory of both the author and the giver. I opened the compact little volume, small indeed in size, but of infinite charm, with the intention of reading whatever came to hand, for I could happen upon nothing that would be otherwise than edifying and devout. Now it chanced that the tenth book presented itself. My brother, waiting to hear something of St. Augustine's from my lips, stood attentively by. I call him, and God too, to witness that where I first fixed my eyes it was written: "And men go about to wonder at the heights of the mountains, and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide sweep of rivers, and the circuit of the ocean, and the revolution of the stars, but themselves they consider not." I was abashed, and, asking my brother (who was anxious to hear more) not to annoy me, I closed the book, angry with myself that I should still be admiring earthly things who might long ago have learned from even the pagan philosophers that nothing is wonderful but the soul, which, when great itself, finds nothing great outside itself. Then, in truth, I was satisfied that I had seen enough of the mountain; I turned my inward eye upon myself, and from that time not a syllable fell from my lips until we reached the bottom again Those words had given me occupation enough, for I could not believe that it was by a mere accident that I had happened upon them. What I had there read I believed to be addressed to me and to no other.

[J. H. Robinson and H. W. Rolfe, *Petrarch.*]

Thus the first Alpinist's adventure ended in discom-

fiture. Thus the medieval temper triumphed over the modern.

How did nature affect Dante? Was he entirely a man of his time, as he was in his conception of the world, in his philosophy and religion, in his dogmatism, his respect for authority, his belief in the absolute? Or did he, like Petrarch, foreshadow a later age, as he did by reason of his irrepressible personality? It is hard to tell. Of this much we may be sure: he was vividly imprest by rugged, stormy scenes, and, unlike any writer for centuries to come, had the inclination and the art to record these impressions on paper. Yet he does not dwell upon them. Ostensibly, at least, he does not introduce them for their own sake; for the most part, they simply flash before us as similes. But no word-painter of our own day could, in a single phrase, evoke a clearer picture, nor one that would more strongly appeal to our modern sensibility. Even in the youthful *Vita Nuova* we have a sympathetic treatment of snow, which in the Middle Ages, and to the present day in Italy, is habitually associated with cold and gloom. "Then these ladies began to converse together; and, as sometimes we see water falling mingled with pretty snow, so it seemed to me I beheld their words issue forth mingled with sighs" (*New Life*, XVIII). To the superb winter sketches contained in two of Dante's lyrics we have already referred (see Chapter IV). The frozen pool of Cocytus, at the bottom of Hell, is conceived in a different spirit; for in it are immerst the souls of traitors.

When we were down within the darksome well,
Beneath the giants' feet, but lower far,
And I was scanning still the lofty wall,
I heard it said to me: "Look how thou steppest!
Take heed thou do not trample with thy feet
The heads of the tired, miserable brothers!"
Whereat I turned me round, and saw before me
And underfoot a lake, that from the frost
The semblance had of glass, and not of water.
So thick a veil ne'er made upon its current
In winter-time Danube in Austria,
Nor there beneath the frigid sky the Don,
As there was here; so that if Tambernich
Had fallen upon it, or Pietrapana,
E'en to the edge 't would not have given a creak.
And as to croak the frog doth place himself
With muzzle out of water,—when is dreaming
Of gleaning oftentimes the peasant-girl,—
Livid, as far down as where shame appears,
Were the disconsolate souls within the ice,
Setting their teeth unto the note of storks.

[*Hell*, XXXII: Longfellow.]

In the lines that follow, the charm of winter is upon us again—midwinter, when the days are beginning to lengthen, when the hoar frost, under the bright morning sun, presents the likeness of its "white sister," snow:

In that new season of the youthful year
When Sun in wet Aquarius cools his mane,
And lengthening nights to southward disappear;

When glistening Frost upon the ground doth feign
The likeness of her sister lily-white,
Tho brief the time her pencilings remain;
The churl, whose beasts have not a blade to bite,
Rises from bed, and sees the whitening plain,
Whereat his thigh he mournfully doth smite,
Goes in, and doth thro' all the house complain,
A rueful husbandman in hopeless plight;
Then looks anew, and gathers hope again,
Seeing the earth hath changed its visage quite
Since last he lookt; and snatches up his crook
And drives his flocks to feed, a happy wight:
Thus terrified me first my master's look,
Seeing his brow so darkly overcast;
Thus promptly from his hand the balm I took.

[*Hell*, XXIV.]

Views of savage rocks and dizzy cliffs are suggestively rather than pictorially conveyed in the descriptions of Hell; but every trait gives the impression of something really seen. More than usually precise in its outlines is this sketch of a landslide:

Like to the dump of rock that smote the bank
Of River Adige, this side of Trent—
By earthquake caused, or else by weakening flank—
And from the summit, whence it first was rent,
So gouged and gullied is the mountainside,
It offers man a possible descent:
E'en so our path adown the slanting slide.

[*Hell*, XII.]

Here is a bit of wild, mysterious woodland, the forest of the suicides:

Not yet had Nessus reacht his former place
When we began to penetrate a wood,
In which no pathway ever markt a trace.
No leaves of green, but foliage murky-hued;
Not straight, but twisted, knotty, every stick;
Not fruits but thorns were there, venom-imbued.
The savage beasts have forest none so thick,
Those beasts which hate each cultivated spot
In moist Maremma's lonesome bailiwick.

[*Hell*, XIII.]

A stormwind rages in Hell even as its prototype raged on earth:

I reacht a spot where every light is dumb;
It bellows like the sea tempestuous,
When blown by blasts which there to battle come.
The storm of Hell, ever continuous,
Swift sweeps the spirits on its hurricane;
Whirling and clashing, it torments them thus.

[*Hell*, V.]

An infernal cataract, the sound of whose water is "so near that, had we spoken, we scarce could have been heard," evokes the memory of an Italian waterfall, the situation of which has been minutely described:

Thus, pouring down a straight-descending rock,
That ruddy water so re-echoed there
That ears could bear not long the deafening shock.

[*Hell*, XVI.]

To the precipitous Italian Riviera is compared a cliff on the Mountain of Purgatory:

We reacht the mountain-bottom by-and-by.
Then rose the rocky wall so straight and free
That vainly there had human legs been spry.
The loneliest, wildest path 'twixt Lerici
And high Turbia, when compared to this,
Is like a stairway smooth and plain to see.

[*Purgatory*, III.]

As we climb the slopes of this sky-scraping island, the atmosphere of mountain scenery surrounds us. In one place we have a reminiscence of mist on the heights:

Reader, if ever thou hast climbed on high,
And mist envelopt thee and made thy sight
As cloudy as the mole's skin-covered eye,
Remember, when the fog's thick, humid night
Begins to scatter, how the disklike sun
Across the vapor feebly shows its light;
Then shall thy fancy be prepared to run
And show thee how it lookt, as first I saw
Its rays again, when day was nearly done.

[*Purgatory*, XVII.]

In another we breathe the clear air of the mountain-top, when Dante and his two companions, Virgil and Statius, lie down to rest on the narrow stairway that is cut deep into the last cliff:

Straight rose the stairway thro' the rifted rock
In such direction that the sunset ray
Upon the steps before me I did block,

And when but few of these behind us lay,
My guides and I perceived the sun had set,
Because my shadow took itself away.
And ere horizon's vasty coronet
Did everywhere a self-same aspect don
And night got all the gifts she was to get,
Each chose a stair to make his bed upon;
For so the mountain law our courage foiled
That strength (but not desire) to climb was gone.
As goats which, still unfed, were swift and wild
Upon the hills, now silent in the shade,
Chewing the cud, become exceeding mild,
While hotly burns the sun; and, stark and staid,
The goatherd, leaning on his staff hard by,
With drowsy service keeps them unafraid;
And as, beneath the clear nocturnal sky,
The shepherd guards his quiet sheep alone,
Lest some four-footed prowler make them fly:
So we reposed upon the stairway prone—
The shepherds they, and I the sheep—all three
Incased on either side in walls of stone.
Small sky beyond the crevice could I see;
But in that little, stars did I behold
Bigger and brighter than they used to be.
And while I gazed and pondered in my fold,
Sleep overtook me—sleep, which oftentimes,
Before things happen, has the story told.

[*Purgatory*, XXVII.]

The idyllic touch that lends peculiar interest to this last passage, we find once more in the famous descrip-

tion of the flock of sheep, compared to a throng of wandering souls startled at the sight of a living man:

As sheep from out the fold come pushing past
By ones and twos and threes, while mates hard by
Stand timidly with eyes and nose downcast;
And what the first one does, the others try,
Crowding upon her, if she chance to wait,
Sedate and silly, never knowing why:
E'en thus, of all that bevy fortunate
The leader I beheld start forward then,
Modest in face in dignified in gait.

[*Purgatory*, III.]

This touch occurs, as we have seen in the picture of the farmer dismayed by the hoar frost, even amidst the horrors of the lower world. Like soaring doves, the spirits of Francesca and Paolo come sailing through the dark air to Dante, when he calls:

As thro' the air, transported by her will,
Drawn to her dearest nest, the mother-dove
Comes soaring with her wings outspread and still,
So sped the two, leaving the swarm above
Where Dido is, and cleft the cruel air
To us, so potent was the call of love.

[*Hell*, V.]

The descent of lost souls to Charon's bark reminds the poet of birds decoyed, and of the fall of autumn leaves:

As one by one the leaves, all autumn-browned,
Come drifting down, until the naked bough
Sees all his pretty garments on the ground,

E'en thus do Adam's wicked children now,
At Charon's call, like birds allured by song,
Drop one by one from off th' embankment's brow.
[*Hell*, III.]

The gentle aspects of nature are more readily recalled than her repellent side. Several little specimens of nature's daintiness appear unexpectedly in Hell; but no forbidding scenes intrude upon Heaven, where the images are suited to the loveliness of the skies.

As mother-bird 'mid grateful foliage bides
Within the nest, her cherisht chicks among,
While night all things in outer darkness hides,
But, yearning to behold her worshipt young,
Eager to toil, their hungry beaks to fill
(The sweetest labor ever told by tongue!),
Anticipates the dawn, with loving thrill,
And on the topmost twig awaits the sun,
Watching for day to break, and watching still,
Thus, all erect, my lady had begun
Attentively to watch that point of heaven
'Neath which the orb of day seems loath to run.
[*Paradise*, XXIII.]

We can conceive of the amphitheater of Paradise by thinking of a flowery hillside:

As, mirrored in a pool, a bank is seen
And seems content its beauty to behold,
What time its slope is rich in flowers and green,

Thus, rising tier on tier in hosts untold
Around the light, I saw reflected there
Those human souls that have regained the fold.
[*Paradise*, XXX.]

An army of spirits illumined by an invisible light above is likened to a field in bloom, lighted by the sun while the observer is shaded by a cloud:

As under covered skies my eyes have seen,
In bygone days, a field with flowers bedight
Lit by a ray that shone the clouds between,
Full many a swarm I saw of spirits bright
Illumined from above by blazing beams,
But saw not whence descended all the light.
[*Paradise*, XXXIII.]

Now the sun is about to rise on the island of Purgatory:

Soft eastern sapphire tint, enveloping
The clear expanse of sky, serene and bright
From zenith to the far horizon's ring,
Began once more my vision to delight,
When first I issued from the deathly air
Which down below had saddened heart and sight.
The love-begetting planet, wondrous fair,
Turned all the east to one resplendent smile,
And veiled the Fishes twain that followed there.
. . . . . .
The dawn was chasing forth the morning breeze
That fled before it, so that I descried
Far out from shore the rippling of the seas.
[*Purgatory*, I.]

Let not the reader infer, from the abundance of these examples, that our poet spends many of his verses on the portrayal of nature. For him, as for every medieval artist, the all-important theme is man. In this respect his age quite agreed with the classical period that went before. Mankind is the subject of the *Divine Comedy*. In his picturing of humanity, Dante makes comparatively small use of the descriptive method. Herein he differs from Chaucer, Boccaccio, and other exhibitors of men. Big groups of beings, to be sure, he does describe: as, for instance, the soothsayers in Hell, with their necks so twisted that their tears flow down their backs; or the envious in Purgatory, seated on the ground, meek and miserable, with their backs against a wall, their eyes sewed up with wires; or, in Heaven, the inconstant nuns seen in the substance of the moon, figures so faint that the poet at first takes them for reflections and looks behind him for the real shapes:

> Such as through polished and transparent glass,
> Or waters crystalline and undisturbed,
> But not so deep as that their bed be lost,
> Come back again the outlines of our faces
> So feeble, that a pearl on forehead white
> Comes not less speedily unto our eyes;
> Such saw I many faces prompt to speak.
>
> [*Paradise*, III: Longfellow.]

In dealing with individuals, however, the dramatic method is preferred. The author lets his characters

reveal themselves by their own words and deeds. From the time of the ancient Greeks to the age of Shakespere, no playwright equaled Dante in dramatic feeling or dramatic skill. For this reason, the epithet "Comedy," applied by the writer to his poem, has for us an appropriateness unsuspected by the giver. As an observer and depicter of his fellow-creatures, Dante has in the Middle Ages no rivals save Boccaccio and Chaucer. Both of these he surpasses in force and conciseness, but they possess in compensation a genial humor quite foreign to him.

One of the most thrilling episodes in the *Divine Comedy*, the tragic story of Count Ugolino, was copied by Chaucer. The event recorded occurred in Dante's lifetime. A great Pisan noble, master of the city, through the treachery of a certain Archbishop was overpowered, and with two sons and two grandchildren was confined in a tower, where they all were finally left to starve. Our poet finds the souls of betrayer and betrayed frozen together in the ice at the bottom of Hell:

> We now had left him, passing on our way,
> When I beheld two spirits by the ice
> Pent in one hollow, that the head of one
> Was cowl unto the other; and, as bread
> Is raven'd up through hunger, the uppermost
> Did so apply his fangs to the other's brain,
> Where the spine joins it. Not more furiously
> On Menalippus' temples Tydeus gnaw'd,
> Than on that skull and on its garbage he.

"O thou! who show'st so beastly sign of hate
'Gainst him thou prey'st on, let me hear," said I,
"The cause, on such condition, that if right
Warrant thy grievance, knowing who ye are,
And what the color of his sinning was,
I may repay thee in the world above,
If that wherewith I speak be moist so long."
His jaws uplifting from their fell repast,
That sinner wiped them on the hairs o' the head
Which he behind had mangled, then began:
"Thy will obeying, I call up afresh
Sorrow past cure, which, but to think of, wrings
My heart, or ere I tell on't. But if words
That I may utter shall prove seed to bear
Fruit of eternal infamy to him,
The traitor whom I gnaw at, thou at once
Shalt see me speak and weep. Who thou mayst be
I know not, nor how here below art come:
But Florentine thou seemest of a truth,
When I do hear thee. Know, I was on earth
Count Ugolino, and the Archbishop he
Ruggieri. Why I neighbor him so close,
Now list: That through effect of his ill thoughts
In him my trust reposing, I was ta'en
And after murder'd, need is not I tell.
What therefore thou canst not have heard, that is,
How cruel was the murder, shalt thou hear,
And know if he have wrong'd me. A small grate
Within that mew, which for my sake the name
Of famine bears, where others yet must pine,
Already through its opening several moons

Had shown me, when I slept the evil sleep
That from the future tore the curtain off.
This one, methought, as master of the sport,
Rode forth, to chase the gaunt wolf and his whelps,
Unto the mountain which forbids the sight
Of Lucca to the Pisan. With lean brachs
Inquisitive and keen, before him ranged
Lanfranchi with Sismondi and Gualandi.
After short course the father and the sons
Seem'd tired and lagging, and methought I saw
The sharp tusks gore their sides. When I awoke,
Before the dawn, amid their sleep I heard
My sons (for they were with me) weep and ask
For bread. Right cruel art thou, if no pang
Thou feel at thinking what my heart foretold;
And if not now, why use thy tears to flow?
Now had they waken'd; and the hour drew near
When they were wont to bring us food; the mind
Of each misgave him through his dream, and I
Heard, at its outlet underneath, lock'd up
The horrible tower: whence, uttering not a word,
I look'd upon the visage of my sons.
I wept not: so all stone I felt within.
They wept: and one, my little Anselm, cried,
'Thou lookest so! Father, what ails thee?' Yet
I shed no tear, nor answer'd all that day
Nor the next night, until another sun
Came out upon the world. When a faint beam
Had to our doleful prison made its way,
And in four countenances I descried
The image of my own, on either hand

Through agony I bit; and they, who thought
I did it through desire of feeding, rose
O' the sudden, and cried, 'Father, we should grieve
Far less, if thou wouldst eat of us: thou gavest
These weeds of miserable flesh we wear;
And do thou strip them off from us again.'
Then, not to make them sadder, I kept down
My spirit in stillness. That day and the next
We all were silent. Ah, obdurate earth!
Why open'dst not upon us? When we came
To the fourth day, then Gaddo at my feet
Outstretch'd did fling him, crying, 'Hast no help
For me, my father?' There he died; and e'en
Plainly as thou seest me, saw I the three
Fall one by one 'twixt the fifth day and sixth:
Whence I betook me, now grown blind, to grope
Over them all, and for three days aloud
Call'd on them who were dead. Then, fasting got
The mastery of grief."

[*Hell*, XXXII, XXXIII: Cary.]

In his notation of externals, Dante is always brief and vivid. His figures betray their character by their pose. Witness the haughty Farinata degli Uberti, risen to his feet in his fiery tomb among the heretics, "with breast and brow erect, as holding Hell in great contempt." Near him, all paternal solicitude, is Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, the father of Dante's "first friend," eager to catch a glimpse of the son whom he supposes to be with the poet:

Then rose beside him in the vacant room,
Uncovered to the chin, another shade;
I think that he was kneeling in the tomb.
All round about my form he stared, and made
As if with me another form to find;
But when his eager doubt was all allayed,
He weeping said: "If altitude of mind
Conducts thee thro' this sightless prison-house,
Where is my son? Why is he left behind?"

[*Hell*, x.]

The mischief-maker, Pier da Medicina, bloodily mangled, reveals by his looks his sanguinary, quarrelsome bent:

Another shade, who had his gullet cleft,
And even to the brows his nose had shed,
And eke one solitary ear had left,
Stopt like the rest, and stared, and marvelèd;
Before them all then opened up his throat,
Which outwardly on either side was red.

[*Hell*, XXVIII.]

The shapelessly bloated form of Master Adam, the counterfeiter, helplessly supine, is a symbol of his futile desire to disfigure and inflate the coinage:

I saw a carcass, cittern-like in plan,
If only one his trunk should amputate
Down at the end that splits apart in man.
The heavy dropsy, that doth so unmate
The parts (with humor which doth ill digest)
That face and belly poorly correlate,

Made him hold open both his lips distrest—
E'en as the burning hectic doth, for thirst—
One toward the chin, the other upward prest.
[*Hell*, XXX.]

At the opposite extreme is the noble Manfred, champion of the Empire, whom Dante meets on the shore of Purgatory, and whose portrait we have already seen (Chapter II). Of still another sort is Belacqua: lazy in this life, he appears as shiftless as ever while waiting outside the Purgatorial gate.

Thither we went, and there some spirits viewed
Behind a shady boulder in a row,
As people stretch themselves in lassitude;
And one of them, who weary seemed and slow,
Was sitting still and clasping either knee,
His face between the two sunk very low.
"O sweet my lord," said I, "that fellow see
Who looks to be of such an idle breed
That laziness might well his sister be!"
Turning to us at that, the wight took heed,
Lifting his face a bit along the thigh,
And said, "Go up, since thou art full of speed!"
[*Purgatory*, IV.]

The adventurous poet Sordello, satirist of corrupt society, critic of kings, becomes in the *Commedia* the type of patriotism. Dante and Virgil espy him on the lower slope of the Mountain of Purgatory:

"But yonder see a soul, which, all alone,
Is looking down upon us. We shall learn
From it the quickest way, to me unknown."

Thither we went. O Lombard spirit stern,
How scornful and how proud thou ponderest!
How dignified thine eyes, and slow to turn!
Never a word that wraith to us addrest,
But let us go, with nothing but a stare
Such as a lion gives, who lies at rest.
Yet Virgil ventured nearer, with a prayer
That it should show to us the best ascent.
No answer made the spirit sitting there,
But askt about our country and our bent;
And "Mantua" my dearest lord began,
When suddenly the ghost, so self-intent,
Sprang toward him from its seat. "O Mantuan!
Sordello," it exclaimed, "thy townsman, I!"
And each embraced his fellow-countryman.

[*Purgatory*, VI.]

Last in the long procession is St. Bernard the contemplator, whom Dante finds at his side when Beatrice has left him. This "holy elder" bids the poet look about him in the garden of Paradise:

"Fly thro' this garden with those eyes of thine;
For seeing it will fortify thy gaze
To clamber upward on the ray divine.
And Heaven's Queen, who keepeth me ablaze
For love of her, will grant us every grace,
Because her own devoted Bernard prays."
As one who from some far Croatian place,
To see our Lord's True Image, comes alone,
And, having yearned so long to see that face,

Can never look enough, and while 't is shown
Says to himself: "My Jesus, God of truth,
Now was this visage really thine own?"
So I, who saw that love's eternal youth
Whose contemplation, in the world below,
Tasted the peace supreme in very sooth.

[*Paradise*, XXXI.]

The Middle Ages, with all their fierce, murderous selfishness, were by no means devoid of tender sentiment. Love of kindred, of friends, of benefactors was always there to exert a softening influence, seconding the too-often fruitless precepts of Christianity. Another refining influence was the ideal of chivalry, a product of the establishment of knighthood, which, at first a purely military institution, came, in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, to assume a courtly and religious character, with a lofty standard of gallantry and generosity. We are apt, and with good reason, to think of Dante as hard and severe; but he had a very gentle side. Where can we find greater delicacy of feeling than in his unwillingness to walk in staring silence past a row of souls which, temporarily blinded, cannot return his gaze?

It seemed to me unkind to pass before,
Beholding them while they beheld me not;
I turned for counsel to my guide once more.

[*Purgatory*, XIII.]

Particularly sweet, and surprising in so stern a poet, are the occasional glimpses of domestic life and family

affection. Some critics have gratuitously supposed Dante to have been unhappy in his home, impatient of family ties, without love of kindred. In support of this view there are only two arguments—both of them, when examined, insignificant. The first is his silence concerning his relatives: this we have already explained as due to his sense of propriety. The second is his separation from his wife during his banishment; but for her to remain with her children in Florence, where she had influential connections, instead of roaming with her penniless and homeless husband, was probably the only rational course. The children later joined their father in Ravenna. Against the imputation of indifference may be cited all the evidence we can gather from the lips of the poet. No unfeeling husband drew this picture of the Florentine wives of the good old days:

> One watcht beside the cradle in the night
> And, soothing, spake that language infantile
> Which first doth fond parental ears delight.
> Another, swiftly spinning all the while,
> With tales of Trojans, Fiesole, and Rome
> Her troop of tiny listeners did beguile.
>
> [*Paradise*, XV.]

No unsympathetic soul wrote thus of the relation of child to mother:

> I turned, all dumb with wonder, to my guide,
> Just as a child, who runs his woes to tell
> Always to her in whom he doth confide;

And, as the mother comforteth full well
And quickly, too, her pale and panting boy
(That voice of hers doth all his fears dispel),
"Know'st not," she cried, "that thou art in the sky?"
[*Paradise*, XXII.]

Or thus:

With that expectancy I turned aside
With which a little child to mother runs
Whene'er he is distrest or terrified.
[*Purgatory*, XXX.]

Only a fond father could so enter into the spirit of baby life:

Awaking late, no little innocent
So sudden plunges toward its mother's breast,
With face intent upon its nourishment,
As I did bend.
[*Paradise*, XXX.]

Where shall we find more tender understanding of infantile emotion than in the following lines, in which bright souls, flaming upward toward the risen Virgin, are compared to a baby's gesture of love?

And as a babe which stretches either arm
To reach its mother, after it is fed,
Showing a heart with sweet affection warm,
Thus every flaming brightness reared its head
And higher, higher straining, by its act
The love it bore to Mary plainly said.
[*Paradise*, XXIII.]

Family affection finds relatively little expression in the Middle Ages, altho fathers and mothers were doubtless just as fond then as they are now. Dante loved children. In the vast amphitheater of Paradise he reserves the whole lower half for those who died before they had an opportunity to exercise free will. Now, current opinion, as exprest in art and writing, even in the teaching of St. Thomas, held that resurrected bodies shall appear in the semblance of the prime of life. In the stone carvings which on the front of so many churches depict the Judgment Day, the figures are all of the same age, neither old nor immature. Yet Dante chose to keep for his celestial babies the heavenly charm of babyhood. He could not forego the spectacle of a countless host of tiny boys and girls, all chirping with innocent joy.

> Their youth those little faces plainly tell,
> Their childish treble voices tell it, too,
> If thou but use thine eyes and listen well.
>
> [*Paradise*, XXXII.]

Such gentleness is, however, not the dominant note in Dante's song. Those were days of sturdy passions. Men's feelings, in life, if not in letters, were less restrained and less disguised. The chronicles of the time are a record of abominable strife, hatred, and cruelty. All know that Dante was a good hater. But strong as he was in hate, he was stronger still in love. All his emotions were more intense than those of common folk, even in his own age; that is why, after all these

centuries, they come throbbing into our hearts with undiminisht vigor. The love and gratitude he poured out to his Maker, the mystic cult of an ideal Beatrice which colored his whole imaginative life, his glowing admiration for the Saviour-Emperor, Henry VII, his thankful affection for everyone who showed him kindness—these tender feelings did not so absorb him as to exclude the fondnesses of everyday life. But the former were fit themes for verse, while the latter, in his medieval judgment, were not; and we are left to infer them from scraps of unintended testimony.

For the Emperor he has all the unquestioning devotion of a vassal for a feudal lord. In Paradise, where earthly distinctions are supposed to be lost, an Imperial throne awaits the great Henry. Beatrice points it out to her wondering disciple:

> On yonder seat, which thou so clearly see'st
> Conspicuous for the crown that caps the throne,
> Shall sit, ere thou shalt join this marriage feast,
> The soul of one, to men as Cæsar known,
> Great Henry, who shall come thy land to save
> Before that land to readiness has grown.
>
> [*Paradise*, XXX.]

Hospitality, before the days of easy travel, was a virtue more cherisht than it is now, and held in almost worshipful esteem. Especially was it appreciated by those who had suffered one of those changes of fortune so frequent in a quarrelsome age. And Dante had only

too good reason to know its worth. His gratitude to the Scaligeri of Verona he immortalized in the prophetic account of his exile, already cited. Everyone who entertained him in his years of homeless poverty received the only reward he could give, an undying tribute of praise. Thus, addressing one of its members in Purgatory, he compliments the worthy Malaspina family, which he visited some six years after the fictitious journey of the *Divine Comedy*. Before the sun shall return seven times to the sign of Aries (that is, before seven years are gone), the poet is to see for himself how this noble race maintains its reputation for liberality and valor.

"I never yet," said I, "have sought your shores.
But where in Europe doth a mortal dwell
Who Malaspina's heritage ignores?
Report, which speaketh of your house so well,
So heralds forth the squires and all the sward
That he who ne'er was there thereof can tell.
I swear (so may I journey heavenward!)
Your honored family hath never shed
The glory of the wallet and the sword.
By nature and tradition favorèd,
Alone, despite our world-misleading guide,
It walks its way, and scorns to be misled."
"Go to," said he. "The sun shall not subside
Seven times within the bed that Aries
Fourfootedly doth cover and bestride,

Before the courteous judgment thou dost please
To utter, shall be fastened in thy mind
With stouter nails than hearsay eulogies,
Unless events predestined lag behind."

[*Purgatory*, VIII.]

In the following prophetic lines, uttered in Purgatory by the soul of the poet Bonagiunta of Lucca, we are to see, no doubt, a delicate compliment to some kind hostess, still too young, in 1300, to wear the matrimonial veil:

"A woman lives," he spake, "as yet unveiled,
Who in due time shall make thee glad to see
My city, sadly tho it be assailed.
This foresight thou shalt carry forth with thee.
If thou hast misconstrued my murmurings,
Real events shall make thee error-free."

[*Purgatory*, XXIV.]

Dante's gratitude, not confined to living persons from whom he had received favors, was extended to all those, alive or dead, from whom he had derived benefit: to the author of his Latin grammar, to the Provençal poet from whose works he had learned most of the art of versification, to the Greek philosopher who taught him so much, to Virgil above all, his model and guide. In the Garden of Eden the poet, recognizing his beloved Beatrice, turns instinctively to his master to tell of his overwhelming joy. But Virgil, his mission fulfilled, has silently departed. All the joys of the Earthly Paradise (which Eve once sacrificed to her wilfulness) cannot comfort the

disciple for his loss. Dante's face, washt clean with dew by Virgil when they had emerged from Hell, is once more stained with tears.

> Virgil was gone! and we were all bereft—
> Virgil, my sweetest sire! Virgil, who led
> My soul to safety, when no hope was left.
> Not all our ancient mother forfeited,
> All Eden, could prevent my dew-cleansed cheeks
> From changing whiteness to a tearful red.
>
> [*Purgatory*, XXX.]

Here is real pathos, a quality none too common in the literature of the Middle Ages. When it does appear, it comes naturally and incidentally, as in this passage, and expresses itself with modest brevity. Never is it consciously developt to torture the reader's feelings. That recreation was reserved for a later age. In religious literature, the tear-compelling pictures of the Crucifixion and of the sorrows of Mary are drawn with an obviously sacred purpose. Even in Dante, who offers us more pathetic touches than are to be found in other medieval writings, the sadness has nothing morbid, nothing to suggest the cultivation of a melancholy mood. The pathetic story of Francesca da Rimini is apparently introduced to enlist sympathy for that lady and in part to rehabilitate her memory. That of Pier delle Vigne is brought in to emphasize the fatal folly of suicide. The harrowing tale of Count Ugolino is intended to excite indignation against Pisa. In the last case pathos has its

origin in wrath; in the second, in moral fervor; in the first, in compassion and gratitude.

Spiritual passion we find in the life and writings of the mystics and particularly in their interpretation of the Song of Songs. The religion of St. Augustine has a passionately emotional quality, which reappears in the religious authors of the eleventh century and in the twelfth pervades Christian literature and art. In fact, the foundation of every other love is the love of God:

> The Good that makes the court of Heaven rejoice
> Is Alpha, yea, and Omega of all
> That Love recites, with loud or gentle voice.
>
> [*Paradise*, XXVI.]

This love is neither cold respect nor perfunctory reverence: it is an overwhelming passion. The men of olden days were closer to God than we are; he was to them no misty abstraction, but the most real of beings. Devotion to him was coupled, in Dante's heart, with absolute faith in his revealed teaching. The acceptance or rejection of belief is dependent on free will; Dante, in his love, accepted without reserve. And the dead Florentine girl, Beatrice, early transformed by his fancy into a symbol of divine revelation, became the guide of his life. In him, and doubtless in others, the fervor of religious emotion lent a new intensity to human love. Thus he addresses her in Paradise:

> "O lady mine, who makest hope endure,
> Who fearlessly didst walk into the Night
> My blessedness eternal to assure,

Of all the objects that have met my sight
I owe the grace and the efficiency
To thy munificence and to thy might.
From bondage thou to freedom leddest me,
By every means and every holy art,
By all the ways that open are to thee.
Now let thy bounty nevermore depart,
In order that my soul, by thee redeemed,
May quit my body pleasing to thy heart!"
This was my prayer. She, distant as she seemed,
Bestowed on me a single glance and smile,
Then sought again the Light which endless streamed.
[*Paradise*, XXXI.]

Passionate love of God implies passionate hatred of God's enemies. Of this there is no lack of evidence in the *Divine Comedy*. Indeed, the very fulness and violence of Dante's reprobation may blind a more temperate spirit to the essentially affectionate quality of his nature. The lack of strong convictions of any kind makes it easy for us to maintain a decorous moderation. Let us not be too shockt when, after enumerating the crimes of the royal house of France, the poet exclaims:

O! when, my Lord, O! when may I aspire
To see that gleeful vengeance, long concealed,
Which in thy secret heart sweetens thine ire?
[*Purgatory*, XX.]

Dante's uncompromising attitude toward the wrong-doer often furnishes hot food for our palate. We have heard the invective which the poet puts into the mouth

of Peter Damian, upbraiding the degenerate and luxury-loving clergy. We have heard even St. Peter—the light that envelops him turning red with anger—cry out in Heaven against Boniface, his unfit successor. We have listened to the bold rebuke which the author himself, standing beside the hole in which Nicholas III is planted upside down, addresses to that greedy prelate. But there is a passage more revolting than any of these. At the bottom of Hell, while the pilgrim and his guide are traversing the plain of ice in which traitors are immerst up to their heads, Dante stumbles upon Bocca degli Abati, who betrayed the Florentines at the crucial battle of Montaperti:

And while we were advancing tow'rds the middle,
Where everything of weight unites together,
And I was shivering in the eternal shade,
Whether 't were will, or destiny, or chance,
I know not; but in walking 'mong the heads
I struck my foot hard in the face of one.
Weeping he growled: "Why dost thou trample me?
Unless thou comest to increase the vengeance
Of Montaperti, why dost thou molest me?"
And I: "My Master, now wait here for me,
That I through him may issue from a doubt;
Then thou mayst hurry me, as thou shalt wish."
The Leader stopped; and to that one I said
Who was blaspheming violently still:
"Who art thou, that thus reprehendest others?"
"Now who art thou, that goest through Antenora
Smiting," replied he, "other people's cheeks,
So that, if thou wert living, 't were too much?"

"Living I am, and dear to thee it may be,"
Was my response, "if thou demandest fame,
That 'mid the other notes thy name I place."
And he to me: "For the reverse I long;
Take thyself hence, and give me no more trouble;
For ill thou knowest how to flatter in this hollow."
Then by the scalp behind I seized upon him,
And said: "It must needs be thou name thyself,
Or not a hair remain upon thee here."
Whence he to me: "Though thou strip off my hair,
I will not tell thee who I am, nor show thee,
If on my head a thousand times thou fall."
I had his hair in hand already twisted,
And more than one shock of it had pulled out,
He barking, with his eyes held firmly down,
When cried another: "What doth ail thee, Bocca?
Is't not enough to clatter with thy jaws,
But thou must bark? What devil touches thee?"
"Now," said I, "I care not to have thee speak,
Accursed traitor; for unto thy shame
I will report of thee veracious news."

[*Hell*, XXXII: Longfellow.]

Indignation at sin, and even at the sinner, was in the Middle Ages not a fault, but a virtue. This doctrine is illustrated by an episode which occurs when Dante and Virgil, crossing the Styx in a little boat, encounter the shade of Filippo Argenti, a Florentine notorious for his arrogance and brutal violence:

While we our course o'er the dead channel held,
One drench'd in mire before me came, and said:

"Who art thou, that thus comest ere thine hour?"
I answered: "Though I come, I tarry not;
But who art thou, that art become so foul?"
"One, as thou seest, who mourn": he straight replied,
To which I thus: "In mourning and in wo,
Curst spirit! tarry thou. I know thee well,
E'en thus in filth disguised." Then stretch'd he forth
Hands to the bark; whereof my teacher sage
Aware, thrusting him back: "Away! down there
To the other dogs!" then, with his arms my neck
Encircling, kiss'd my cheek, and spake: "O soul,
Justly disdainful! blest was she in whom
Thou wast conceived. He in the world was one
For arrogance noted: to his memory
No virtue lends its lustre; even so
Here is his shadow furious. There above,
How many now hold themselves mighty kings,
Who here like swine shall wallow in the mire,
Leaving behind them horrible dispraise!"
I then: "Master! him fain would I behold
Whelm'd in these dregs, before we quit the lake."
He thus: "Or ever to thy view the shore
Be offer'd, satisfied shall be that wish,
Which well deserves completion." Scarce his words
Were ended, when I saw the miry tribes
Set on him with such violence, that yet
For that render I thanks to God, and praise.
"To Filippo Argenti!" cried they all:
And on himself the moody Florentine
Turn'd his avenging fangs.

[*Hell*, VIII: Cary.]

At the bottom of Hell, among the gelid souls of traitors who murdered their guests, the same doctrine is more startlingly exemplified. Eager to learn the identity of one of these hateful spirits, a certain Frate Alberigo, Dante promises him, in return for the desired revelation, to scrape the ice from his eyes, and swears to go to the depths of frozen Cocytus if he fulfil not his vow. But all the while the poet knows that in any case his journey will take him thither. He is paying the deceiver in his own coin. When, therefore, Alberigo discloses himself, Dante refuses the promised service. "Meanness to him was real courtesy" (*Hell*, XXXIII).

Invective is the bludgeon of the moralist, and Dante uses it with the skill of a militant reformer. Nowadays it has gone out of style among the socially elect; but in the Middle Ages it was in high favor. Here is an ingenious specimen, in which the inhabitants of the Casentino, Arezzo, Florence, and Pisa are likened respectively to swine, to curs, to wolves, and to foxes. Dante, conversing with two blinded spirits in Purgatory, is askt his name:

> And I: "Through midst of Tuscany there wanders
> A streamlet that is born in Falterone,
> And not a hundred miles of course suffice it;
> From thereupon do I this body bring.
> To tell you who I am were speech in vain,
> Because my name as yet makes no great noise."
> "If well thy meaning I can penetrate
> With intellect of mine," then answered me
> He who first spake, "thou speakest of the Arno."

And said the other to him: "Why concealed
This one the appellation of that river,
Even as a man doth of things horrible?"
And thus the shade that questioned was of this
Himself acquitted: "I know not; but truly
'T is fit the name of such a valley perish;
For from its fountain-head. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Virtue is like an enemy avoided
By all, as is a serpent, through misfortune
Of place, or through bad habit that impels them;
On which account have so transformed their nature
The dwellers in that miserable valley,
It seems that Circe had them in her pasture.
'Mid ugly swine, of acorns worthier
Than other food for human use created,
It first directeth its impoverished way.
Curs findeth it thereafter, coming downward,
More snarling than their puissance demands,
And turns from them disdainfully its muzzle.
It goes on falling, and the more it grows,
The more it finds the dogs becoming wolves,
This malediet and maladventurous ditch.
Descended then through many a hollow gulf,
It finds the foxes so replete with fraud,
They fear no cunning that may master them."

[*Purgatory*, XIV: Longfellow.]

Pisa receives still harsher treatment when the poet, after listening to Count Ugolino's pitiful tale, calls upon

two islands off the Arno's mouth to stop up the river and drown every inhabitant of the cruel city:

Ah! Pisa, shame of lovely Italy,
Of all the land that heareth *sì* resound!
Since sister towns are slow to punish thee—
Caprara and Gorgona, let them bound
And slide away and block the Arno's mouth,
That every creature in thee may be drowned!
[*Hell*, XXXIII.]

Against Florence, the beloved and unworthy, he is bitterest of all; and the entire Italian peninsula finds in him a biting critic. When Sordello and Virgil, learning that they are fellow-townsmen, without further inquiry rush into each other's arms, Dante is moved to this apostrophe:

Ah! servile Italy, a vessel thou
Unguided in the storm, a home of tears,
Once queen of provinces, a brothel now!
That noble soul so lightning-swift appears
To bid his townsman welcome over there,
When first his city's dulcet name he hears;
And yet thy living tenants cannot bear
To bide in peace, and mate devoureth mate—
Those citizens who walls and ditches share.
Seek, wretched one, about thy sea-girt state,
Survey thy shores, then cast thine eyes within,
And name a town where love hath banisht hate.

. . . . . .

Come, cruel German Prince, and see the wrong
Thy nobles suffer! Cure their malady!
See Santafior, how safe it is, and strong!

Come, come! thy widowed Rome repining see,
Who calleth day and night in loneliness:
"My Cæsar, say, why comest not to me?"

[*Purgatory*, VI.]

Invective is most cutting when it takes a sarcastic turn, as does the outburst just cited, which continues thus:

My Florence, frown not! Gladly I confess
That this digression interests thee not,
Thanks to thy people's wise forehandedness.
Justice from many a bow is slowly shot,
For in the heart it first must be discust;
Thy patriots spit it from their lips red-hot,
Many refuse the load of public trust;
Thy patriots, all unaskt, but nothing slow,
Loudly respond: "I'll take it if I must!"
Now smile, to think that thou art favored so!
Such wealth, such peace, such wisdom tried and trued!
If I am right, the consequence will show.
Athens and Sparta, which of old eschewed
Barbarity, and made the ancient laws,
Took but a baby step toward rectitude,
Compared to thee. Thine edicts are of gauze
So fine, the fabric which October span
Ere mid-November fades away and thaws.
How often, since thy memory began,
Hast altered coinage, statutes, laws, and ways,
And changed thy population man for man?
If thou, enlightened, on thyself shalt gaze,
A dame shalt thou behold, sore sick abed,
Who still upon her mattress never stays,
But tossing, tossing, fights her pain instead.

[*Purgatory*, VI.]

Bitter sarcasm informs the catalogue of crimes of the French royal line, when the poet reaches the career of Philip the Fair, wickedest of kings, and of his kinsman, Charles of Anjou, conqueror of Naples and slayer of the youthful heir, Conradin. Charles was by many held responsible for the sudden death of St. Thomas Aquinas.

> Then it began with force and falsity
> Its greedy course; and next, to make amends,
> Ponthieu it seized, Gascoigne and Normandy.
> Came Charles to Italy. To make amends,
> He offered Conradin as victim; then
> Shoved Thomas into Heaven, to make amends.
>
> [*Purgatory*, XX.]

Having discovered in Hell five thieves, all Florentines, Dante cries ironically:

> Florence, rejoice, renowned in all the world!
> For over land and sea thy pinions fly,
> And over Hell thy glory is unfurled.
> Among the robbers, five did I descry,
> Burghers of thine, who flush my cheek with shame
> And thy good name exalt not very high.
>
> [*Hell*, XXVI.]

Irony and sarcasm often contain a dose of humor, but they easily dispense with it. In the Middle Ages they are generally devoid of that benign element. We have said that Dante lackt the genial humor of Boccaccio and Chaucer, and some critics have gone so far as to deny him any humor at all. Not with entire justice,

altho this criticism has more basis than the charge of indifference to family ties. Dante was too earnest, too emotional, too vehement to form a habit of geniality. Some humor he possest, in the background of his consciousness, but it seldom came to the front. It saved him, no doubt, from the extravagances that beset the path of the over-serious. With all his violence, he never fell into the incongruous absurdities that mar the work of so great a poet as Victor Hugo. And occasionally his humor does reveal itself in positive fashion. It then appears in two widely different forms: a demure playfulness, which crops out in the Latin eclogues; and a coarse, grim jocoseness, exemplified in the assignment of some of the grotesque punishments in Hell—for instance, that of the Simonists, or dishonest prelates, who are thrust head-first into holes in the ground, while fire plays upon the soles of their feet. The usurers also are victims of his facetiousness, being so bestially disfigured as to pass recognition, distinguishable one from another only by the monograms on their money-bags, upon which they are forever fondly gazing. One of them speaks, and then

> His mouth he twisted, and stuck out his tongue,
> Even as an ox that fain would lick its nose.
>
> [*Hell*, XVII.]

The best example of this comicality is the farce performed by the devils called Malebranche, or Badpaws, and one of the damned entrusted to their care. The

Badpaws preside over a circular trench full of boiling pitch, wherein are immerst the souls of public men who misused their office. Sardinia, a colonial possession, and the "sadly assailed" Lucca seem to have been notorious for malfeasance of this sort. As a prelude we may cite the arrival of a shade from that city. Local color is afforded by the mention of the Lucchese patron saint, Zita; of the little river Serchio that runs hard by; of the Holy Face, an ancient wooden crucifix still greatly revered in Lucca; and by the ironical reference to the party leader and arch-swindler Bonturo. The whole scene is in the same style as countless medieval miniatures and reliefs depicting Hell, and quite different from Dante's usual vein:

Thus, not by fire but by divine command,
Thick pitch was boiling down below me, which
Made sticky all the bank on either hand.
This much I saw; but saw within the pitch
Great bubbles only, which the heat did puff.
Now it would swell, now settle in the ditch.
While I stood staring at the sticky stuff,
"Look, look!" my leader cried, "come here, come here!"
And called me to his side along the bluff.
Then I lookt back, as one who in the rear
Would fain observe some peril he must flee,
All impotent from unexpected fear,
And sees, but does not check his flight to see.
A swarthy fiend I saw, with rapid pace
Crossing the ridge behind us, close to me.

Ah me, ah me! how cruel was his face,
How harsh and horrid his satanic mien,
With wings outspread and feet in nimble chase!
Upon his shoulder, which was high and keen,
A guilty soul with both his haunches lay,
His ankles fast the demon's claws between.
He crost our bridge. "Badpaws," I heard him say,
"Lo! one of Santa Zita's aldermen.
Duck him! For fresh supplies I must away
To Lucca-town, my private swindler-pen.
There (save Bonturo) everyone 's a cheat.
'No' turns to 'yes' for money in that den."
He chuckt him down, and turned his flying feet
Along the crag. No mastiff on the track
So eagerly pursues a thief's retreat.
The sinner sank, then rose with vaulted back.
The demons cried, who lurkt the bridge below,
"No Holy Face will help thee here, alack!
The water's finer in the Serchio!
Unless impatient with our claws to mix,
No more above the top thy body show!"
This said, they prodded him with countless pricks,
And cried: "Down under cover shalt thou trot!
In dark concealment try thy shady tricks!"
Thus cook-directed scullions, round the pot,
Will not allow the boiling meat to float,
But push it down with forks, to keep it hot.

[*Hell*, XXI.]

Now comes the farce itself, in tone not at all unlike the ludicrous interludes that enlivened the early French religious drama:

Mine eyes were all intent upon the pitch,
To mark the souls that took this fiery dip
And ascertain the nature of the ditch.
Like dolphins, when with arching back they skip—
Warning the watchful sailor on the main
To have a care, if he would save his ship—
So, now and then, to mitigate the pain,
A sinner heaved his back up like a log
And quick as lightning darted down again.
And as along a gutter many a frog
Lies crouching in the wet, his nose without,
His feet and body hidden in the bog,
Thus lay projecting sinners roundabout;
But when the demon chief approacht the humps,
Beneath the bubbles vanisht every snout.
I saw (and still my heart with horror thumps)
One sinner linger, just as we espy
One frog remaining while another jumps.
Scratchdog, the demon who was nearest by,
With grappling-iron grabbed his pitchy hair
And pulled him dripping, otterlike, on high.
(I knew the names of all the devils there;
For when they were detailed, I prickt my ears—
And when the roll was called—with studious care).
"O Rubicant, come, ply thy talons' shears
Upon his skin, and flay him as he stands!"
Clamored in chorus all those mutineers.
"Master," said I, "by prayers or by commands
Learn who may be this wretch of evil star,
Who now has come into his foemen's hands."

My leader then stept up; standing not far,
He askt him who he was. The wight began:
"My birthplace was the kingdom of Navarre.
My father squandered all a mortal can;
He spent himself, and all he had, and more.
My mother made of me a serving-man.
To good King Tybalt I was servitor.
Then I applied me justice to offend,
For which in boiling heat I pay the score."
And Ciriatto, from whose maw extend
Two hoglike tusks, the trembling sinner ript
And made him feel how one of them could rend.
Mid cruel cats the mouse at last had slipt!
The captain clutcht him then with either arm,
Shouting: "Stand off, the while I hold him gript!"
My master then he faced: "Without alarm
Ask quickly," said he, "if thou fain wouldst learn
More things from him before he comes to harm."
And Virgil askt: "Among the souls that burn
Knowest thou any down below that hail
From Italy?" "Ah! would I might return
To one whose home was just outside the pale!
E'en now I left him with the guilty throng
Who 'neath the pitch are safe from fork and nail."
But Libicocco cried: "This lasts too long!"
Seizing the culprit's arm with iron hook,
He ript the flesh and tore away a thong.
And Draghignazzo slyly aimed his crook
Down at the legs. Then their commander cast
On this demon and that an evil look.

Now, when their fury was a little past,
And while the wretch was gazing at his gash,
My leader put his question quick and fast:
"Who was that spirit whom, unwisely rash,
Thou didst forsake, this luckless shore to see?"
"That was a knave whom nothing could abash,
Gomita, steward of Gallura, he
Who had his master's foemen in his fort
And used them so that all were full of glee.
Their case, he says, he settled out of court.
His every office proved him, I contend,
No petty grafter, but of princely sort,
And Master Michael Zanche is his friend,
From Logudoro. Never does their gab
And gossip of Sardinia seem to end.
But see yon fiend! No longer can I blab.
See how he grits his teeth! I know full well
He presently intends to scratch my scab."
The mighty chieftain turned to Farfarel,
Whose staring eyes betrayed a blow to come,
And shouted: "Stand aside, thou bird of Hell!"
And when the wight with fear was not so numb,
"If you desire to see or hear," he cried,
"Tuscans or Lombards, I can get you some.
But let the devils stand a bit aside,
So that no harm shall apprehended be;
And I, who motionless shall here abide,
Shall get you seven, instead of single me.
I'll whistle, as we do when one peeps out
And signals to the others. You shall see!"

At that Cagnazzo lifted up his snout
And shook his head and yelled: "Now fate forfend!
What mischief he 's contrived, his foes to flout!"
And he, whose sly devices had no end,
Replied: "Too mischievous indeed am I,
To my companions a pernicious friend!"
Then broke forth Alichino: "Shouldst thou try
To jump," said he, opposing all the rest,
"Instead of running for thee, I shall fly
And flap my wings above the pitch's breast!
Let's quit the brink; the bank our figures screen!
Among us all we'll see if he is best."
Now, reader, look! Strange sport shall soon be seen.
Each demon, backward faring, turned his toes,
And that one first who most averse had been.
The Navarrese a fitting moment chose,
Sprang to his feet with preconceived design,
And leapt below, escaping from his foes.
Then all the fiends remorsefully repine,
But mostly he who mostly was to blame.
Headlong he shot, and shouted: "Thou art mine!"
But fear can wings outfly: too late he came.
One plunged beneath; the other markt his loss,
And, turning, archt his chest in upward aim.
Exactly so a duck will quickly toss
Itself below, when comes the hawk in sight;
And he flies back again, ruffled and cross.
One demon, angry at their foolish plight,
Was flying after, not at all afeard
The cheat would win, because he fain would fight,

And when the fleeing sinner disappeared,
Against his mate he turned his every tool;
Above the trench they grappled, clawed, and veered.
His hawklike friend at fighting was no fool:
He scratcht like mad; the bout was hot and thick,
Till both fell plump into the boiling pool.
The burning heat ungrappled them full quick;
But getting out was quite another thing,
Because their pitchy pinions made them stick.
The captain, with his comrades whimpering,
Bade four of them across the channel ride,
And, forks and all, they rapidly took wing.
The demons took their post on either side,
And held their hooks to reach the two beglued,
Whose flesh was baked already in their hide.
While they were busy, we our way pursued.

[*Hell*, XXII.]

The same rude comicality crops up in a dispute between two of the damned: our friend the counterfeiter, Master Adam, now a bloated, helpless mass of dropsy, and the fever-ridden shade of Sinon, the lying Greek who entered Troy as a pretended fugitive, and, having been received with kindness, induced the Trojans to admit the fatal wooden horse. Sinon and Potiphar's wife are both stretcht beside Adam "on the right frontier" of his distended belly. The counterfeiter names them, in answer to the poet's inquiry:

I askt of him: "Who are these wretches here,
Who, like wet hands in winter, reek and steam,
Bordering close upon thy right frontier?"

"I found them here," he said, "a helpless team,
When first I tumbled down into this trench;
Helpless for all eternity they seem.
The one is Joseph's false-accusing wench;
The other, Sinon, lying Greek, of Troy.
High fever makes them send forth such a stench."
And one of them, whom Adam did annoy
By naming him in terms so troublesome,
Hard-fisted thumpt his belly's base alloy.
The belly sounded loud as any drum.
Then Adam smote his face. No one would guess
His arm, nor yet his neighbor's fist, was numb.
Striking he said: "Tho I be motionless
And cannot stir my heavy limbs a bit,
My arm is nimble for such business."
"Thine arm," I heard, "did not so nimbly flit
When thou wast marching to be burnt to death;
But nimblier still, when thou didst counterfeit."
The dropsied one replied: "With truthful breath
Thou speakest now. Thy truthfulness did limp
When Trojans questioned thee, the story saith."
"I scrimpt the truth; the coinage thou didst scrimp.
I did a single deed to cause remorse,
And thou didst more than any other imp."
"Remember, perjurer, the wooden horse!"
Rejoins the one who swollen-bellied lies,
"Its world-wide fame thy grief shall reinforce."
"A grief to thee be thirst," the Greek replies,
"Tongue-cracking thirst! Likewise the putrid stuff
That bulks thy bulging form before thine eyes!"

The coiner answers: "Readily enough
Thy mouth for evil always is outspread.
If thirst torments me, and if humors puff,
Thou hast thy fever and thine aching head.
To make thee lick Narcissus' looking-glass
Not many words of urging need be said."

[*Hell*, XXX.]

For his interest in this vulgar altercation, Dante is sharply rebuked by Virgil:

Desire to hear such talk is low desire.

Not Virgil but his own conscience reproved the poet for a still worse offense. Once upon a time he had so far forgotten himself as actually to participate in a similar exchange of scurrilities. His sonnet correspondence with Forese Donati, a kinsman of the lady Dante married, has already been quoted (Chapter IV). In it we saw, together with accusations of greediness, theft, and illegitimate birth, cast at the luckless *gourmet*, a cruel fling at Forese's wife and her neglected state. Later the author made all possible amends. The imputation of high living was well founded; and Dante, allotting a place to Donati's spirit in Purgatory, has to put the soul among the gluttonous. All else he implicitly retracts; explicitly, the charge of coldness to his wife, to whom Forese, through the poet, now pays a loving tribute. Here is the scene. Wasted by hunger and thirst, tormented by the sight of fruit trees and the spray of waterfalls, a throng of ghosts overtakes Dante, who, with Virgil and Statius, is traversing one of the terraces of Purgatory.

Thus, after us, a crowd came running on,
More swift than we, and on us fixt their gaze—
A crowd of souls, in silent prayer each one.
Dark, distant eyes and cavernous they raise,
Pallid in face, and so exceeding thin,
Their body's surface every bone displays.

[*Purgatory*, XXIII.]

As Dante is staring at them in wonder, one of the troop recognizes him:

And lo! from out his head's deep-sunken nest
A spirit turned his eyes and gazed on me,
And then cried out: "With what grace am I blest!"
Ne'er by his face should I have known 't was he,
But in his voice was that to me revealed
Which in his face outworn I could not see.
That spark in me as with a flash unsealed
My knowledge of the features sorely marred:
Forese's face I knew, despite its shield.
"Ah! look not thou at this dry scab and hard,"
So prayed he, "which my countenance doth stain,
Nor at this flesh so meagre and so scarred;
But tell me true who thou art, who these twain,
Yonder, who here have thee accompanied;
Delay not this right clearly to explain."
"That face of thine, I wept for when it died,
Gives me no less cause now for sore despair,
Beholding it so altered," I replied.
"But say in God's name, what leaves thee so bare?
Nor bid me speak while wonder holds me still.
Ill can he speak who's filled with other care."

[*Purgatory*, XXIII.]

The spirit explains to Dante the nature of its penance. But now the poet is puzzled to find Forese, who had died only some four years previously and had postponed repentance until the very end, so far advanced on the way of atonement.

"Forese, from the day," to him said I,
"Thou left'st the world, a better life to win,
Up to this time five years have not rolled by.
If thou hadst lost the power for further sin
Ere on thee came the hour of blessed woe
Thro' which we wedlock new with God begin,
How hast thou mounted hither? Surely so
I should have thought to find thee where delay
By equal time repairs itself below."
And he to me: "So quickly here to stay,
To drink the wormwood sweet of this my pain,
My Nella's tears have thus abridged my way.
With deepest sighs and prayer's devoutest strain
She drew me from the region where we wait
And set me free from circles that detain.
So much more dear to God, more loved the state
Of that my widowed one I loved of yore,
As she in her good deeds is isolate."

[*Purgatory*, XXIII.]

Thus Dante pays the penalty for indulgence in a kind of vulgar jocoseness that was all too common in his day. It is to be found not only in the farce and the poetic debate, but also in the *fabliau*. Happily our author possest, as we have already observed, something rarer and

better than this: a slender vein of quite different humor, staid, dainty, playful—the humor whose facial manifestation is a scarcely perceptible smile. A little trace of it lends savor to his Latin eclogues. We taste its salt in his mild self-reproval for his family pride in Cacciaguida (his noble great-great-grandfather) and in the indulgent silence of Beatrice. Of the indolent Belacqua, resting in the shade of a rock on the mountainside below Purgatory, we have caught a glimpse before: let us look at him again, and listen to his mocking words, as he pokes fun at Dante's ignorance of the course of the sun in the southern hemisphere; and let us note Dante's repartee, and the delicate way in which he conveys to Belacqua his surprise at finding him on the road to salvation:

By that I knew him. Then the painful pant
That still my breath a little quickenèd
Did not prevent my climbing up the slant,
When I was come, he scarcely raised his head.
"Hast thou observed how curiously the sun
O'er thy left shoulder drives his car?" he said.
His lazy acts, his words dropt one by one
Provoked my lips to smile a little bit.
"My sorrow for thee," I replied, "is done.
But say, Belacqua, wherefore dost thou sit
Just here? Awaitest thou some sort of guide,
Or thine old habit canst thou never quit?"

[*Purgatory*, IV.]

The prettiest instance of all is the scene in which Statius, just releast from Purgatory, learns the identity

of his worshipt master, Virgil, with whom he is unwittingly conversing. He has been telling how he owes all his poetic art and inspiration to the example of the Mantuan bard, who, on earth, had preceded him by some three generations. The *Æneid*, he declares, was his "mother and nurse in poesy"—the *Æneid*, "that divine flame which has illumined more than a thousand." For the privilege of having been a contemporary of its author, he would be willing to remain another year in Purgatory, an exile from Heaven.

"Could I have lived when Virgil was alive,
My just completed term of banishment
For one full year I gladly would revive."
Virgil, at this, his gaze upon me bent
With lips that in their silence said: "Be still!"
But human will is not omnipotent;
For smiles and tears so instantly fulfil
The hest of every feeling whence they flow,
In truthful men they least obey the will.
I smiled, like those who secret knowledge show.
The shade stopt short and lookt me in the eyes,
The eyes, which best reveal the thought below.
"Now, by the outcome of thy great emprise,
Say why, erstwhile, as I thy visage scanned,
My glance a flash of laughter did surprise."
Now am I caught on one and t'other hand:
One calls for silence, t'other calls for speech!
I heave a sigh; my Sage doth understand:
"Fear not," he saith to me, "the truth to teach.
Speak boldly and divulge, at my behest,
What Statius doth so earnestly beseech."

Wherefore I said: "Perhaps thou wonderest,
O ancient spirit, at my laughing face.
With greater wonder thou shalt be imprest!
This shade, which upward guides my mortal pace,
Is Virgil, in whose verses thou hast found
The power to sing of gods and human race.
If thou my laugh didst otherwise expound,
Give up thine explanation as unmeet.
Thy speech of Virgil was the real ground."
Swiftly he bowed to clasp my leader's feet;
But Virgil cried: "O brother, do not bend!
For thou art shadow; shadow thou dost greet."
He rose and said: "Now canst thou comprehend
The greatness of mine ardent love for thee,
When I to shadows fleshly substance lend,
Forgetting our unbodied vanity."

[*Purgatory*, XXI.]

The dignified banter of these lines recalls the tone of the old-world eclogue, and at the same time seems to bring the poet strangely near to us, and still nearer to the polisht conversation of our grandparents in the Georgian age. The gentleman is not a recent upstart: he has existed ever since civilization began; and so has the vulgarian. Oftener than we like to believe, gentleman and vulgarian dwell in the same body, using its mouth in turn. Few, if any, mortals abide constantly either on the heights or on the flatland. Especially do the lonely peak-dwellers feel, from time to time, the need of descending from their thin atmosphere to the impure but lung-filling air of the lowlands, where most of their

fellow-creatures live. The same Dante who converst so daintily with his intellectual peers, who naturally consorted with the gentlemen and scholars of past or present times, could, in his hours of relaxation, delight in things offensive to his habitual taste. For we need not hesitate to assume that the Dante of the colloquy just cited, rather than the clever but far from delicate correspondent of Forese Donati, was the eminent Florentine whom his contemporaries best knew. Both personalities, however, belonged to him; and our ingenuous surprise at seeing them housed together proves only our fondness for ideally simple human types. We are bewildered by characters that we cannot pigeonhole. The hero and the villain of melodrama illustrate man's favorite mode of cataloguing his fellows. The first thing a child wants to know, on looking at a battle-scene, is, which are the good people and which are the bad. Should we be moved to inquire which type of Dantesque humor is more characteristic of the Middle Ages, evidence would point to the grosser variety. Life and speech were then coarser than now; ugly, filthy sights were commoner; literature admitted allusions which we banish to post-prandial speech. The bard of the Badpaws may be regarded, then, as on the whole more particularly a man of his age than the poet who portrayed Belacqua. Even more distinctively of his age, however, was the seer who beheld Heaven and God.

All aspects of human nature, from purest to vilest, are represented in the divine poem, and all sorts and con-

ditions of men, from Pope to pedagogue. Similar to these portraits in variety, but unequal to them in number and importance, are the copies of landscape, skies, and natural phenomena. Marvelous as all these descriptions are, they do not differ in kind from the less skilful pencilings of many artists. The power to evoke at will mental pictures of things once seen, and to call them up, by means of words, in the minds of others, is common to all great poets, ancient and modern. But the gift of visualizing things never beheld by the eyes of the body, of clothing in sensible form the uncorporeal creations of a grandiose imagination, and making them actually perceptible to a reader—this is a privilege accorded to very few at any time, and to none other so fully as to Dante. His cavernous Hell, titanic tho its proportions be, still consists, in the main, of elements not unknown to us. By combining and magnifying former impressions, we can build it up out of our own stock of experience. For his mountainous Purgatory, the necessary materials are more easily available in our mental record. But his Heaven is composed, in large measure, of ingredients that we have never consciously translated into terms of sense. Even the physical skies seem scarcely within the grasp of our perception. Their tenuous texture is woven of light, motion, and music, all raised to an infinite intensity. And the spirit-world affords our groping senses no hold at all; yet Dante, achieving the impossible, makes us see and hear it. Subtly effective is his iteration of the desperate inadequacy of speech, of the impo-

tence of memory and imagination. We are constantly led to reach out for something far beyond the power of expression. Sometimes a little phrase opens for one instant a vista of blinding glory:

> "To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," began
> Ail Paradise to sing, "shall glory be!"
> Like wine the sweetness thro' my being ran.
> What I beheld about me seemed to me
> A smile, a smile of all the universe.
> Thro' ears and eyes poured in my ecstasy.
>
> [*Paradise*, XXVII.]

Dazzling as the smile of the universe is the smile of Beatrice:

> Not long did Beatricë let me tire,
> But spake, and beamed upon me with a smile
> To make a man exultant in a fire.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Within her eyes a smile was glowing, such
> That I believed with mine the deepest depth
> Of all my grace and Paradise to touch.
>
> [*Paradise*, VII, XV.]

In setting before us the splendor of a double ring of bright spirits in the sphere of the sun, the poet constructs from elements of the material heavens an image of the invisible brilliancy of the spirit-life. He bids us select fifteen brightest stars from all parts of the sky, then pick the seven great lights of the Dipper and the two that are conspicuous at the outer end of the Little

Bear, and conceive of these twenty-four luminaries arranged in the shape of a double Ariadne's Crown, both circles revolving, one within the other, like two rings of dancers.

A shadow this of what was really there:
The constellation and the double dance
Wheeling about the center where we were.
[*Paradise*, XIII.]

The eternal outpouring of God's grace is suggested to us by the figure of a huge river of light, the souls of men appearing as flowers on its banks, the angels as sparks that nestle in them like bees.

Light I beheld, outpouring like a stream,
Blazing with brilliance; both its banks, bedight
With wondrous bloom, in vernal glory gleam.
From out the river living sparks take flight
And nestle in the flowers on either side,
Like gold-encircled rubies glowing bright.
Then, fragrance-filled, it seems, and satisfied,
They plunge into the mystic flood again;
Where enters one, another quits the tide.
[*Paradise*, XXX.]

CHAPTER XIII

THE MASTERPIECE

HOW fully Dante is the embodiment of the Middle Ages we have now seen: how clearly and completely he expresses the political, social, scientific, philosophical, religious ideas of the time—a time when religious thought dominated all other; how masterfully he epitomizes nearly all the learning of the long period that intervened between classic civilization and the Renaissance; how the singing impulse, how all literary striving, how the whole artistic instinct of a great epoch find their one adequate exponent in him; how medieval life, with its varied passions, and ancient life, as the medieval understanding conceived it, live on forever in his pages; how even the Middle-Age comic spirit is represented, scantily to be sure, but most characteristically; how mysticism, symbolism, romantic fancy, dramatic realism, didacticism, each developt to its highest power, are blended in him, as in the mind of the Middle Ages, but never earlier nor later in human history; how, finally, he voiced the hitherto speechless emotions aroused by the wilder aspects of nature. Dante's work, taken as a whole, contains all these elements; and it contains them in a form which

keen vision, exalted imagination, intensity of feeling and conviction invest with an undying interest, and which a supreme command of style has made imperishable.

All these things—not excepting the lyric vein—are to be found in Dante's masterpiece, the *Divine Comedy*. Its nucleus is a compendium of the vital part of human knowledge; considered from this point of view, it connects itself, through Latini's *Tesoretto*, with the cyclopedia. In semblance it is akin to two favorite medieval types, the vision and the fantastic journey. In substance it is a spiritual autobiography, a record of the soul's awakening and successful quest of God, like the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. In purpose it is a monument to the idealized Beatrice, fulfilling the author's early promise to say of her what never had been said of woman. Allegorical in method, it is the crowning achievement of symbolism.

The action of the poem occurs in 1300, a year of mighty religious excitement over the first Papal jubilee, the year when Dante, born in 1265, had reacht the middle point of normal human life. On the night preceding Good Friday, the poet suddenly becomes aware that he is lost in the dark forest of worldliness.

> Mid-course along our life's allotted way,
> Within a murky wood my mind grew clear:
> Far from the path my feet had gone astray.
> Ah me! a dreadful thing to write—how drear,
> How wild, how waste a look that woodland wore,
> The thought of which to-day renews my fear!

So bitter 't is, that death is scarcely more;
But if the happy ending I would tell,
I needs must speak of things I saw before.
I cannot rightly say how it befell,
So sleepy was my soul when I forsook
The trusty path and wandered down the dell.

[*Hell*, I.]

Now, conscious of his danger, full of terror, he tries to escape. Shining upon the summit of a neighboring mountain—the Mount of Righteousness—are the first rays of the sun, emblem of spiritual enlightenment. Day is dawning; the season is the propitious spring-tide; hope seems to return. But as he begins to climb the hillside, three beasts obstruct his way, the very creatures of which Jeremiah once wrote: a leopard, a lion, a wolf. They represent the evil habits which prevent the sinner from regaining cleanness by his unaided effort. At this desperate juncture, Virgil appears, the wise man of antiquity, the embodiment of Reason. Divine care, ever alert to help struggling mortals, has sent him to Dante's rescue. There is, he declares, no such short way out of the wilderness; their path must descend underground to the bottom of Hell and emerge on the opposite side of the earth. In other words, the remorseful wrongdoer, ere he come to genuine repentance, must sound all the depths of sin, must recognize, under the guidance of Reason, all its ugliness and folly. For a moment Dante hesitates, feeling himself unequal to such a task; but when he learns that the Blessed

Virgin and St. Lucia and his own Beatrice are watching over him, that Beatrice has even come down into the lower world to speed Virgil on his mission, trust banishes doubt, and, safe in the keeping of Divine Mercy, Illuminating Grace, and Revelation, he stoutly follows the footsteps of Reason.

The journey through Hell, which occupies the first book of the poem, symbolizes the disclosure of the real nature of sin. Every class of the damned represents a type of evildoer on earth; every punishment is a picture of some kind of wickedness. The literal Hell, as we have seen, is funnel-shaped, with a crust of earth over its broad top, and its bottom at the center of the globe. Its slopes and falls are not continuous, being broken by circular terraces, on which dwell forever the souls of transgressors who have died unrepentant. Their keepers are demons, once rebellious angels. There are nine such round shelves; the highest have, of course, the greatest circumference. Cliffs and precipices of unequal but always vast height separate one from another. Four horizontal rivers appear at different stages of the pit: Acheron at the top, with its ferryman Charon; Styx, forming the fifth circle, abode of the wrathful; Phlegethon, of boiling blood, contains sanguinary spirits, in the seventh round; frozen Cocytus holds traitors fast, in the ninth and lowest. The ethical plan of Dante's underworld is Aristotelian. Sins fall into three great classes: immoderateness, bestiality, and malice. The first group, lodged in the upper Hell (the first five circles),

is sharply distinguisht from the other two, which belong in the lower Hell, the City of Dis.

Immoderateness—or, as the author calls it, "incontinence"—consists in the inordinate indulgence of a desire not inherently bad; it comprises lust, gluttony, avarice and prodigality (housed together), and wrath. The unchaste are forever wafted helplessly round and round by the hot blast of passion. The greedy are soakt in filth; prostrate in the stinking mire, they are pelted by dirty snow and rain. Restless but futile activity is the keynote of both kinds of misuse of money: misers and spendthrifts are busily engaged in rolling huge rocks in opposite directions. The irate, in a noisome swamp, are incessantly rending one another; while their sullen brethren guzzle mud at the bottom of the bog. With them ends the upper Hell.

Bestiality, as Dante uses the term, means beastly violence: the brutishness of tyrants and robbers, immerst in boiling blood—a violence directed against fellowman; violence against self, as of the suicides, who are turned into gnarled trees; violence toward God, punisht by a rain of fire, which, in a sandy desert, falls upon blasphemers and offenders against nature or human industry.

> Thus pelted down the endless fiery rain.
> Like tinder, when the flint a spark hath shot,
> The sand flamed up, to multiply the pain.
> Forever unremitting was the trot
> Of wretched hands, that brusht, now here, now there,
> The newly fallen flakes that burned so hot.
>
> [*Hell*, XIV.]

Malice, which is of two kinds, requires two circles (the eighth and ninth) for its devotees. In one are ordinary deceivers; in the other, traitors. The first, a broad, slanting belt, is plowed into ten concentric ditches, each with a torment of its own, to accommodate the sundry kinds of fraudulent. As examples, we may cite the hypocrites, marching in solemn procession, crusht under the awful weight of leaden capes that are beautifully gilded outside; also the thieves, who are transformed from men to hideous snakes and back again. Lowest of all are traitors—traitors to kindred, country, guests, and benefactors; they are sunk to different depths in a round plain of ice, which forms the very floor of Hell. Their punishment typifies the absolute coldness of the heart from which love has fled. In the middle of the frozen pool looms the gigantic figure of Satan, embedded to the chest, with Judas, Brutus, and Cassius dangling from his three mouths. Other betrayers of benefactors are entirely covered, and show through the ice like bits of straw in glass. The first three sorts of traitors, on the other hand, have their heads above the surface.

> A thousand doglike faces grinning chill
> I then beheld. The sight of frozen pools
> Gives me the shivers yet, and always will!
>
> [*Hell*, XXXII.]

Not a few members of these various companies have been presented in earlier chapters: the amorous Francesca da Rimini, for instance; the angry Filippo Argenti;

Pier delle Vigne, the suicide; Brunetto Latini; the grafters in the pitch; Bertran de Born and other mischief-makers; Master Adam, the counterfeiter; Bocca degli Abati, the traitor. Some of the devils, too, have made their appearance: Minos, the judge; greedy Cerberus; bloated Plutus; the bestial Minotaur; the monster Geryon, who symbolizes Fraud; the Badpaws; and Lucifer himself. The Minotaur, who presides over the circle of violence, lurks at the top of the landslide—already described—which affords a way down the cliff from the sixth terrace to the seventh. Geryon, genius of deceit, with the face of a just man, the forepart of a dragon, the hinderpart of a serpent, hovers over the ten ditches of the fraudulent. On his back Dante and Virgil descend from the outer edge of the seventh circle to the foot of the huge precipice that divides it from the eighth; and in the description of that descent we may learn how the habit of deception, taking possession of a soul, softly, stealthily carries it down and down and down, all unheeded until the threat of retribution startles the sinner into consciousness.

Just as a parting skiff is pusht from land
And backs and backs, thus Geryon withdraws;
Then, finding empty space on every hand,
He turns his tail where erst his bosom was,
Stretches it out, and wriggles like an eel,
And paddling pulls the air with both his paws.
No greater fear did Phaethon once feel
When, losing Phœbus' reins, he baked the sky,
As all the Milky Way doth still reveal,

Nor Icarus, when heat did liquefy
The wax, and pluckt the pinions from his back,
His father shrieking: "Badly dost thou fly,"
Than mine is now, perceiving that our track
Lies only thro' the air, where nothing shows
Beside the beast, but one unbroken black.
Slowly the creature smoothly swimming goes;
And naught betrays his round descending crawl,
Except a gentle wind which upward blows.
Now on my right I hear the waterfall
Make under us a terrifying din;
So I project my eyes with head and all.
But seeing fires and hearing wails begin,
More timidly the monster I bestride
And, all a-quiver, draw my body in.
And now I mark our circling downward ride,
Unseen before, at last revealed to sight
By torments pressing near on every side.
As falcon, after long and fruitless flight,
Uncalled by lure or bird, doth downward start,
The while his owner sighs: "Thou wilst alight,"
Wearily stoops, whose going was so smart,
Wheeling a hundred times, and, cross and fell,
Far from his master perches all apart,
So Geryon alighted there in Hell,
Beneath the ragged rock's enfolding ring.
His passengers unloaded in the well,
He sped away like arrow-notch from string.

[*Hell*, XVII.]

Another wall of indefinite height parts the last two circles. On the brink of the eighth the travelers are

pickt up by the mighty hands of Antæus, and set down in the ninth. The poet pictures the giant's first bending toward him—which he compares to the leaning tower in Bologna—and his final straightening.

> As Garisenda looks, beneath its stoop,
> Whene'er a cloud, passing above its head,
> Makes it appear contrarywise to droop,
> Antæus lookt to me, who stood in dread
> To see him bend. And I, at such an hour,
> Had gladly ta'en some other road instead.
> But lightly in the pit which doth devour
> Judas and Lucifer, he let us slip.
> Nor lingered, thus inclined, that moving tower,
> But rose, as masts are hoisted in a ship.
>
> [*Hell*, XXXI.]

Christianity recognizes certain faults for which ancient philosophy made no provision: namely, involuntary and wilful unbelief. For these, Catholic Dante has to furnish a place in his Greek Hell. Unbaptized children and virtuous heathen are consigned to the first circle, which forms an external rim of the lower world. Such a fringe, or Limbus, is assumed by the Church Fathers, who tell us that before the descent of Christ into Hell the patriarchs of the Old Testament waited there. In the Limbus is no torment save the lack of God's light, for which the souls yearn endlessly but without hope. The darkness and the fruitless longing represent the moral state of noble pagans on earth. In this circle, however, is a Castle, illumined by pure intelligence; and in it dwell

in comparative contentment the great sages of antiquity, among them, Aristotle, Plato, Homer, and Virgil himself.

> People were there with thoughtful eyes and slow
> And majesty in each commanding look.
> Seldom they spake; their voice was sweet and low.
> [*Hell*, IV.]

Far worse is the fate of voluntary unbelievers, or heretics. Just within the City of Dis, they occupy the sixth circle, between incontinence and bestiality, where blazing tombs are their bed. Those who, in their arrogance, denied the immortality of the soul, are forever buried alive. Allegorically interpreted, their punishment signifies that the heretic's existence is a living death, a life lived in God's fiery wrath. Among them we found the haughty Farinata degli Uberti, and the elder Cavalcanti, solicitous for his son. A third class of lost souls, particularly hateful to Dante, is placed by him quite outside the Aristotelian scheme: moral sluggards, time-servers, and cowards, who populate in great abundance the vestibule of his underworld, beneath the ground but without Hell proper, separated from it by the river Acheron. Pope Celestine V and his lukewarm fellows have appeared in our pages before (Chapter III).

"Now it is time to go, for we have seen all," cries Virgil, when, in the middle of the last circle, he has pointed out the principle of evil, the monstrous, six-winged, three-faced Satan (counterpart and caricature of the Holy Trinity), who is eternally crunching the arch-

traitors, Judas, Brutus, and Cassius. Between his shaggy sides and the enveloping ice there is a narrow aperture; and through this crevice Virgil crawls downward, carrying Dante on his back. As they pass the center of the earth, the guide, "with toil and panting," turns himself and his burden upside down, his course now being upward toward the opposite surface of the globe. Thus climbing, the two poets emerge into a cavern, and rest upon the edge of its stony floor, beside Lucifer's legs, which tower up into vacant space, as his head and shoulders towered in Hell, on the other side. The penitent's understanding of wickedness is at last complete; sin fills him only with disgust. It remains for him to correct his way of living—a tiresome and uneventful process. This weaning from now hateful habits is typified by the obscure, laborious ascent from the earth's center to the outer crust. The journey down through Hell has lasted a night and a day; the escape from evil requires the same length of time. Inasmuch as the descent began at nightfall on Good Friday, the two days' travel would have brought the companions to Sunday evening, had they not gained twelve hours by traversing the globe.

On Easter morn, shortly before daybreak, the poets come forth into the open air on the island of Purgatory. To this isle, which lies in mid-ocean directly opposite Jerusalem, a shining angel conveys in a light, swift bark the souls of Christians who have died repentant. In Dante's symbolism, Purgatory signifies the penance

by which the sin-bound soul is releast, original innocence restored, the spirit cleansed and prepared to see God. Cato of Utica, the type of Free Will, greets and directs the travelers on their first arrival. The island consists of a vast mountain surrounded by a rim of shore. Its top is the Garden of Eden, the state of sinlessness enjoyed by Adam and Eve before the fall, regained by the elect. On its lower parts are souls condemned, for some contumacy or negligence in the first life, to postpone a while the painful but eagerly desired discipline. It is at the foot of the first precipice, among the excommunicated, that Dante encounters Manfred. Along the steep slope he meets the indolent Belacqua, the stately Sordello, both of whom had put off until the last gasp their reconciliation with God. Sordello guides him and his mentor to a valley in the mountainside, where are gathered the ghosts of mighty rulers who had been too absorbed in cares of state. There the poets spend Sunday night; for they can ascend only while the sun of enlightenment illumines their way. Two more nights they pass on the island—one in the circle of Sloth, one on the stairs leading to the Garden of Eden. As twilight reaches the valley, the souls all join in a hymn, asking for protection against the temptations of darkness. Their prayer is heard: two angels, clad in the green of hope, alight near them and presently drive away a serpent which tries to steal into the vale. Here is the first part of the pretty scene:

The hour was come which seamen's fancy bends
And melts their hearts, when they have said farewell
That very day to well-belovèd friends;
And, when he hears a distant tolling bell,
The untried traveler is prickt to tears,
As listening to the dying daylight's knell.
Then I begin to shut my heedless ears
And watch wide-eyed a soul that beckoning stands
And our attention to invite appears.
It claspt and lifted upward both its hands,
And wistful eastward gazing seemed to say:
"My Lord, I care for naught but thy commands."
A hymn devout, "Before the dawn of day,"
So feelingly it sang, so sweetly, too,
It drew me from my consciousness away.
The others then devoutly, sweet and true,
With eyes uplifted to the heavenly wheels,
After their leader sang the music thro'.

[*Purgatory*, VIII.]

During each of Dante's three nights on the mountain he has a significant dream. Just before entering Eden, there comes to him Leah, type of the innocently active life. On the terrace of Sloth he beholds in his sleep a siren, repulsive at first, then, as he gazes, gradually sweet and alluring, but hideous once more when Virgil, or Reason, discloses her real self: she represents the sins of the flesh, whose victims Dante is to see on the morrow. His first night on the isle reveals the sudden, mysterious aid which God extends to the striving penitent: a golden eagle, so he dreams, after wheeling above him,

stoops, and, plucking him from a high summit, bears him aloft to the sphere of fire. When he awakes, he finds himself in front of the gate of Purgatory, on the upper part of the mountain. Thither he has been carried in his sleep by St. Lucia, the symbol of Illuminating Grace. At the doorway is an angel who represents Ecclesiastical Authority. Purgatory itself is made up of seven narrow terraces, separated by cliffs and encircling the mountain-peak. Dante, who has hitherto ascended on the eastern slope, now takes a spiral course, as he climbs from step to step, proceeding some distance to the right in each; and when he quits the last, he has reacht the west side. On every shelf, penance is done for one of the seven capital vices, which are the basis of all the many varieties of wickedness. Purged of these fundamental evil tendencies, the soul, made pure again, has no inclination to do wrong. Dante's journey through this realm represents allegorically his own penance and purification, just as his entrance into Eden betokens his attainment of spiritual cleanness. When he passes the gate, at the bottom, the letter *P* (standing for *Peccatum*, or *Sin*) is seven times graven on his forehead by the guardian; subsequently, as he leaves each circle, an angel removes one of the seven marks, while one of the Beatitudes is heard. In every circle, too, he is edified by the presentation—now in one fashion, now in another—of notable examples not only of the vice there punisht, but also of the opposite virtue.

The capital vices, beginning with the lowest and worst,

are: pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice (and prodigality), gluttony, lust. The first three are sins of the spirit, due to love of evil; the last three, sins of the flesh, are caused by inordinate love of the good things of this world; sloth, the middle one, is the result of inadequate love. The punishment in each ring is a symbol of the discipline one must endure to correct the respective vice: the proud, for instance, creep humbly along under crushing weights.

Sometimes, to hold a ceiling up, or frieze,
A human shape, by way of corbel, bent,
Is seen to press its chest against its knees;
And real sympathy by us is spent
Upon a thing unreal. Thus comprest,
When close I lookt, the crouching spirits went.
'T is true they were not equally distrest,
For some a heavier load than others bore;
But even he who seemed to suffer best
Appeared to weep and cry: "I can no more!"

[*Purgatory*, x.]

The envious, shabby and contrite, sit meekly along the wall, their sinful eyes sewed up with wire; one of these it is who describes the dwellers on the Arno's bank. A suffocating smoke illustrates the painful stifling of the passion of wrath. Sloth is cured by unremitting activity, and therefore the spirits on the fourth terrace rush headlong round and round their circle. Those who spent their energy on pelf, either collecting or scattering it, lie prostrate on the ground with their faces in the dust;

among them grovels Hugh Capet, founder of the iniquitous House of France, and Statius, too, who completes his penance just as Dante arrives. In the sixth circle, where the traveler meets his old companion Forese Donati and the Lucchese poet Bonagiunta, gluttons are disciplined by fearful abstinence, being tantalized by spraying water and luscious fruit. As examples of the amorous, who are purified by fire, we have two great love-poets, Guido Guinizelli and Arnaut Daniel.

Here, for the first and only time, Dante, terrified by the spouting flames, refuses to obey. After an excited but futile exhortation, he is moved at last by Virgil's mention of Beatrice, who waits on the other side; then, boldly plunging into the barrier of fire, he suffers his last penance, and reaches the stairway of the Terrestrial Paradise. On the next morning, all three—Dante, Virgil, and Statius, who has accompanied them—wander through the beauteous garden; and there, beside a brook, they encounter the genius of the place, Matilda, the personification of lovely, youthful innocence, who becomes their guide. Presently appears the majestic pageant of the Church Militant, with Beatrice as its central figure. By her rebukes she stirs her lover's heart to contrition for his past; confession of the mouth follows; then satisfaction of deed, in the form of an agonized swoon. The sacrament is completed by a draught of the two streams of Paradise, Lethe and Eunoë, administered by Matilda as a symbol of absolution. Virgil ere this, his duty done, has silently returned to his Limbus. Statius, we may

assume, passes on to Heaven. Before Dante departs, he witnesses a strange series of happenings, mysterious transformations of the Chariot of Christ and the Tree of Law, to which it has been fastened: these portray the vicissitudes of Church and Empire. When he rises to the sky, it is high noon. He takes his flight from the center of the Garden of Purity, from the edge of the miraculous spring whence Lethe and Eunoë—forgetfulness of evil, memory of good—unchangingly flow.

We have come to the third phase of the soul's experience: its progressive uplifting, guided by Revelation, to the very presence of God. Comprehension, discipline, vision, the themes of the three books of the poem, are for Dante the three stages of religious exaltation. By Hugo of St. Victor the three successive processes are called "cogitation, meditation, contemplation"; while St. Bernard distinguishes *consideratio*, or investigation, from *contemplatio*, or intuition. The pure heart's increasing clearness of perception, its graded approach to intuition of the divine, is described by the *Paradiso* in the guise of a swift ascent through the skies that encircle the earth. Instantaneously, without consciousness of motion, Dante shoots from sphere to sphere, accompanied by Beatrice, who grows more and more beautiful the nearer she brings her disciple to the Revealer. When the height of heights is finally scaled, when the soul is brought into direct communication with its Maker, there is no further need of revealed message; the mission of Beatrice is ended, and she takes her own place among

the blest, leaving her pupil to St. Bernard, or Contemplation.

In each of the nine revolving heavens traverst on the upward way, Dante lingers a while. He enters into the substance of the moon, Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and beholds there the semblances of souls enjoying different degrees of beatitude. Thus is made evident to him the significance of the "many mansions" in our Father's house; and the discourse of the elect, as well as that of Beatrice herself during the journey, brings him to thoro understanding of the doctrines of his faith. In the three lowest spheres he seems to see those spirits whom some imperfection has rendered incapable of the fullest blessedness. Yet there is absolute contentment in all. Love and knowledge all of them receive to the utmost capacity of each, and the supreme joy, surrender to God's will, is shared by every one. The inconstant moon contains the figures of nuns who were forced to break their vows, as was the fate of Empress Constance and Piccarda Donati, the sister of Forese. Mercury holds the images of the ambitious; in that planet the Emperor Justinian relates to Dante the fortunes of the Roman Eagle. Charles Martel, the gentle grandson of Charles of Anjou, is one of the amorous natures that appear to make their home in Venus.

Inside the sun, shining "as the brightness of the firmament," are the great teachers, "they that turn many to righteousness." Twenty-four of these illuminers of the

world, forming a double ring of splendor about the poet and his guide, proceed to enlighten their new guest, their spokesman being Thomas Aquinas, who tells the tale of St. Francis, and Bonaventure, who narrates the life of St. Dominic. Then, as Dante flies from the sun into Mars, he sees the whiteness that has surrounded him transformed to red; and in that ruddy glow countless starlike beings are clustered, like two intersecting Milky Ways, into a gigantic Cross.

> As harp and viol tinkle, sweet to hear,
> With many strings attuned in rightful key,
> E'en tho the music scarcely reach the ear,
> From all the lights which there appeared to me—
> Soul-stirring, tho the words escaped my ken—
> Over the Cross there pealed a melody.
>
> [*Paradise*, XIV.]

Here are the warriors of the Church. Here it is that the poet's ancestor, Cacciaguida, pictures to him the Florence of olden times and prophesies his exile. Once more a change of color betrays his sudden progress; the red turns to white as he penetrates Jupiter, star of the upright. Within this orb a host of fluttering spirits gathers itself, after various shifts of shape, into the form of a huge Eagle, which, speaking with one collective voice, proclaims the mystery of divine justice. Last of the planets is cold Saturn, which harbors monastic souls. One of these recluses, the stern reformer Peter Damian, is moved to a vehement tirade against the luxury of

modern prelates. Hence stretches beyond the reach of sight a gleaming ladder, the emblem of religious contemplation.

In the heaven of the fixt stars Dante enters Gemini, his native constellation. The whole army of the blest now appears to him, and he witnesses the triumph of Christ, of Mary, of Peter, illustrated in a glorious play of celestial lights. Before mounting higher, he is examined by St. Peter, St. James, and St. John in the three Christian virtues. Thereupon Adam draws near and answers some unspoken questions, specifying the nature of his sin, telling the length of his existence on earth and in the Limbus, and the kind of language he spoke. From this sphere, at the bidding of Beatrice, Dante twice looks down to the tiny globe whence he started.

"Ere thou within thy blessedness retreat,
Look down and see what quantities of world
Already I have put below thy feet."

. . . . . .

Mine eyes, returning downward sphere by sphere,
All seven traversing, reacht this globe of ours,
Which made me smile, so cheap did it appear.

[*Paradise*, XXII.]

Near earth, the moon is seen, on its spotless upper side. The sun is viewed with undazzled eye, and its proximity to the orbits of Mercury and Venus is manifest; manifest also are the more exalted courses of hot Mars, temperate Jupiter, and cold Saturn; but all are far remote from the observer's station among the fixt stars.

The planets seven disclosed themselves to me;
Their bigness I beheld, their distant field,
Their orbits all, and their velocity.
While I with Gemini eternal wheeled,
The little floor that makes us so unkind
From river-mouths to mountains lay revealed.
[*Paradise*, XXII.]

Ninth and outermost of the material skies is the transparent and invisible Crystalline Sphere, or Primum Mobile, the fountainhead of physical motion. Here the angelic host, which was not seen in the preceding heaven, discloses itself in the symbolic aspect of nine concentric fiery rings revolving about a point of inconceivable minuteness and brilliancy. The point is the indivisible God, source of all light, around whom turn, with a speed proportionate to their nearness, the nine orders of angels.

The real Paradise is now at hand, the heaven of pure spirit. All that the traveler has seen thus far, the sequence of material spheres with their seeming inhabitants, has been a preparation for his vision of the realm that lies outside time and space. When he first issues from the world of matter, his whole consciousness is filled with the eternal outpouring of divine grace, which appears to his dazzled mind as an immense river of light, gushing forever by flowery banks. Between the flowers and the flood innumerable sparks dart to and fro. These are angels, ministers of grace; and the flowers are blessed souls. The whole scene is but a bewildered

first impression of something that transcends the powers of sense. Thus Beatrice explains it to her disciple:

"The stream," she said, "the jewels thou dost see
Shoot in and out, the flowers smiling pure
Are of their selves a preface shadowy.
Not that the things thou seest be immature:
The immaturity is wholly thine,
Whose eyes so steep a flight cannot endure."

[*Paradise*, XXX.]

Eagerly the poet bends to wet his eyes in the River of Grace, which thereupon suddenly takes the shape of a round ocean of light.

My eyelids' eaves had scarcely sipt the stream
When all at once, the shifting banks amid,
From long to round transformed the waters seem.
Then, just as maskers with their faces hid,
If but their alien semblance they divest,
Look other than, a moment since, they did,
The shooting sparks, the laughing flowers at rest
To loftier revels changed, until I saw
Both courts of Heaven in glory manifest.

[*Paradise*, XXX.]

In more than a thousand circular tiers, around the vast gleaming pool, are seated the blest, in bodily form, as they will appear after the Resurrection. The Lord is shining down on them from above; and between him and them flits the swarm of angels. The amphitheater of white-robed elect, with its bright golden center, has the

aspect of a Rose. Half of its circuit is assigned to the followers of the Old Law, half to the faithful of the New; the lower part is all devoted to little children. St. Bernard, who now takes charge of the pilgrim, points out, amid the host, some of the greatest souls: Mary, Peter, Adam, John the Baptist, Eve, Rachel, with Beatrice beside her. After a devout prayer to the Virgin, he bids Dante bend his gaze upon the Almighty. To the poet's clearing eyes is first revealed the universe in God; then the mysterious Trinity, exprest in the image of three rings of different colors, all occupying the same space; finally the human nature in the divinity of Christ. At this moment the fulness of grace illumines and overmasters him, and his will is merged in the world-will of the Creator. The poet tells it thus:

After this point my vision far surpast
Our human speech, from which such concepts flee,
And even recollection fails at last.
As dreaming men who something clearly see,
And afterwards their feeling can recall
But nothing else is left to memory,
E'en so am I: returneth scarce at all
The thing I saw, yet trickles thro' my mind
The dew of sweetness which therefrom did fall.
Thus runs the snow which sunshine doth unbind;
Thus, writ on fluttering leaves, the Sybil's lore
Was swept away forever by the wind.
O Fire Supreme, which human minds ignore,
Inept to scale thy height, I pray thee, some
Fragment of thy revealing now restore,

And lend such power unto mine organs dumb
That I one single spark of all thy light
May leave to generations yet to come.
For if it glimmer on mine aftersight
And faintly echo in the verse I pen,
Better conceived by man shall be thy might.
I think, so keenly did I suffer when
I faced the living beam, my sight were spent,
Had I mine eyes from it averted then.
This thought new courage to my spirit lent,
As I remember, till my struggling gaze
On God's immeasurable self was bent.
O grace abounding! thro' the endless rays
Thou gavest me full confidence to look,
Till mortal sight was quencht within the blaze.
Whate'er is writ in Cosmos' every nook
Was in that depth collected, ream by ream,
Bound up by love into a single book.
Things transient and eternal blended seem,
And all their operations, so combined
That what I saw was one unchanging gleam.
The bond which all the universe confined
I think I saw, because, this statement made,
An ampler satisfaction floods my mind.
One moment makes my memory fainter fade
Than five and twenty centuries that quest
Which startled Neptune with the Argo's shade.
Now mine uplifted spirit, God-possest,
Was gazing, fixt and still, with all its might,
To deeper look by constant yearning prest.

The while he stands before that Presence bright,
The spellbound gazer never can consent
To turn away for any other sight;
Since goodness, object of the will's intent,
All centers there; outside of It, the best
A true perfection never can present.
Henceforth my telling must be more comprest—
E'en what I can recall—than infant's lore
Whose tongue is moistened still at mother's breast!
It was not that the living Brightness bore
Aught but a single image to my view,
For It is always what it was before;
My sight it was which, peering, stronger grew
And altered, while the change occurred in me,
One selfsame form to various figures new.
Within the deep, clear Light I seemed to see
Three rings, which one dimension doth connect,
Yet are those rings in color ever three.
The first appeared the second to reflect.
As rainbows do; a flame appeared the third,
Which each and other equally project.
O! what a feeble thing is speech, and blurred,
Beside my thought! And this, beside my sight,
Is such that "little" is no fitting word.
O self-contained and everlasting Light,
Which thine own self alone doth understand,
With love and wisdom smiling infinite!
That circle which I deemed a radiant band
By thee reflected and within thee shown,
Examined by mine eyes on every hand,

Seemed painted, with a color all its own,
In very likeness of our human kind;
Wherefore my gaze was fixt on it alone.
As some geometer bends all his mind
To square the circle, yet, by pondering,
The principle he lacks can never find,
So bent was I upon this wondrous thing:
I wondered how the image was applied,
I burned to know how it could fit the ring.
Too high was that for mortal wings to glide—
Till, stricken by a sudden-flashing ray,
My reason found its longing satisfied.
My soaring fancy here at last gave way;
But, like a wheel whose motion nothing mars,
Already wish and will, in even sway,
Were turned by Love, which moves the sun and stars.

[*Paradise*, XXXIII.]

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To readers who may wish to pursue the study of Dante is offered the following list of books, selected, as far as possible, from American and English sources. Attention is called, furthermore, to the *Annual Report* of the Dante Society of Cambridge, Massachusetts, under the auspices of which Society were publisht the three Concordances mentioned below. In the first group of titles, which is arranged alphabetically according to authors, will be found the names of the translations quoted in the preceding pages. Among the versions of the *Divina Commedia*, that of Cary, in blank verse and rather free, is easy to follow; those of Longfellow and Johnson, rhythmical but unrimed, keep close to the text; Norton's is in prose, and very faithful; Plumptre's is, like the original, in *terza rima;* Shadwell's, in rimed stanzas.

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